

Ag. Books Biogr. 363 P-1
Esteban

DON ESTEBAN

Vol. I

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LONDON

PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD

1801

DON ESTEBAN;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF A SPANIARD.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

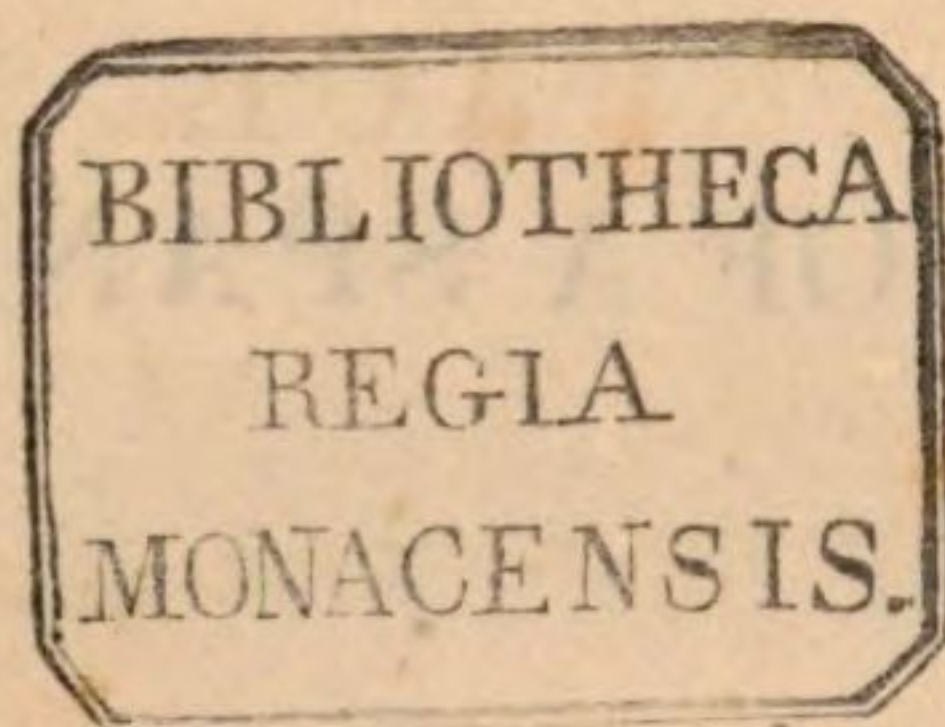
VOL I.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

HENRY, COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1826.



LONDON :

HACKELL, ARROWSMITH, & HODGES, JOHNSON'S-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

PREFACE.

IN ushering into the world the following Memoirs, a word or two may seem requisite, to explain the motives which have induced the author to write and publish them.

Driven from his native country by the late disastrous political events, which still distract unhappy Spain, and severed from all his heart holds dear, the author found, in the sad inactivity of an exile's lot, too many inducements to ponder over his misfortunes and disappointments, not to seek some occupation which might tend to alleviate the recollection of them. He re-

solved, therefore, to retrace on paper the events of his life ; as well the pleasing images of early youth as the active scenes which he has witnessed and shared in for several years. And though this occupation has awakened some painful recollections, it has, nevertheless, been a real comfort and relief to him, by effacing, at least for moments, “ the sad images of the present by the gentle dreams of the past.”

This reason alone would perhaps be sufficient, to the sympathizing heart of an Englishman, to excuse the author for appearing in his foreign dress, inelegant as it may be, and, as he has reason to fear, faulty too. But he has another motive for printing what he has written, and one which will scarcely be considered as insufficient in this country, where so many wish to be acquainted with foreign climes and foreign manners. In giving a detailed history of his life, the author endeavours to present a faithful picture of the manners, habits, and customs of his countrymen.

He takes the reader into the interior of private houses, and shows him what is worthy of notice there ; introduces him to the tertulias, balls, assemblies, and public places ; leads him to the romerias, convents, nunneries, and palaces ; gives him an insight into the national and private character of the Spaniards, and shews them *as they really are*, not as they very often appear to the prejudiced eyes of a foreigner,—who is too apt to draw general conclusions from individual instances, and momentary impressions. The writer has, therefore, entered into details which to Spaniards, to whom they are familiar, may appear trifling ; but which, from their novelty, will probably interest Englishmen, and will, at any rate, give them correct notions of the living manners of Spain.

The writer of these Memoirs hopes he may be excused from offering any laboured apologies for verbal errors, as it is very evident that no one can write in a language which is not ver-

naacular with him, so correctly as a native, and particularly in a case like the present, when the author cannot boast of having been educated, or having resided long, in England. Therefore, ungentle critic, if any such there be, shew thy forbearance and hospitality towards one who enters for the first time thy peculiar domain, not with any presumptuous hope of gaining literary laurels, but humbly to lay before thee an unvarnished narrative of facts, related with that scrupulous regard to truth and fidelity, which becomes an impartial historian.

The author has only to add, that everything he relates is to be considered as simple matter of fact, with the sole exception of those *names* which he has assigned to the parties figuring in the merely *biographical* part of his story.

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DON ESTEBAN;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF A SPANIARD.

CHAPTER I.

Hail rural pleasures ever new!

How when a school-boy did I woo

Your simple sweets!

ALVES' WEEPING BARD.

It was early in the month of September, when the summer vacation in the University had released me from the duty of attending the lectures, that my father, Don Ignacio Lara, fixed the day of our departure for Cigales. This is a little village two leagues distant from Valladolid, where my mother, Doña Teresa Guzman, had an estate consisting chiefly of vineyards, at which we usually spent the vintage vacations.

I happened to be in my father's study when he fixed the happy day of departure, and as these were seasons of festivity and unbounded freedom, particularly for the younger part of the family, I hastened out of the room to bear the gladsome tidings to them all, and particularly to my favourite brother Raymundo, who, on account of his good-humoured gaiety and inexhaustible fun, was the soul of all our parties.

The day of our departure being always a sort of fête, every one of the family had previously prepared himself to appear to the best advantage in the cavalcade which we were in the habit of forming from our house in town to Cigales. Till within the last two years, the order of it was invariably this :—My father, and those friends who came to spend the *Vendimias*^a with us, opened the march, mounted on their horses, and Raymundo and myself, acting as

^a Vintage.

our father's aides-de-camp, rode on ponies beside him. Behind us, riding on asses, came those of our favourite school-fellows whom we had invited to pass the vacation with us. Then followed those of my sisters who could ride, accompanied by their young friends, also mounted on asses, for which purpose all the village dapples were put into requisition. Behind this brilliant donkey squadron, followed a little phaeton, made by my father, and drawn by two large goats, in which rode two of my little sisters. Immediately after advanced the carriage, drawn by mules, with my mother, some of my younger sisters, each carrying her cat on her lap, and our old duenna, with the chattering parrot, shut up in a cage, upon her knees; and last of all came a *carro mato*,^a in which the female servants were placed, according to their antiquity, the youngest last, to be more within hearing of the male servants, who followed the

^a A covered waggon.

carro on foot, entertaining them with their sprightly stories and pleasant jokes.

This kind of order, however, was kept only in passing through the streets, and as far as the city gates. When we had left these behind, and were in the open country, we all mingled together, and the greatest confusion prevailed till we reached the village.

Such had always been the character of our vintage processions till the period at which my history opens. But as we were now growing older, some of the donkeys were exchanged for mules, and the goats were displaced by ponies ; nor was the order of procession so well kept as formerly ; for now we preferred riding by the side of my sisters' friends, to enjoy their conversation, and shew off our own boyish gallantry. This year also, instead of our own carriage, we took a proper *coche de colleras*,^a hired for the purpose. These vehicles are generally

^a A travelling coach.

attended by three men, the *mayoral*,^a the *zagal*,^b and the *mozo de mulas*.^c The *mayoral* sits upon the box, holding the reins of the two nearest mules, the only two that are managed by reins, the four leaders being perfectly at liberty, and governed only by the voice, except when they come to a difficult part of the road, or are entering a town, when the *zagal* runs between the two first, holding them by the halter. Their heads are most gaily ornamented with tufts and hanging strings of different colours, and with little bells, of which each mule has eighteen or twenty. They all know their names perfectly well, and obey the voice of the *mayoral* with surprising docility; but if any one fail in obedience the *mozo* jumps down from the box, and quickly overtaking the refractory mule, thrashes her without mercy, then in the twinkling of an eye leaps upon the box again, and there consigns her to all the devils, calling her

^a Chief coachman.

^b A subordinate coachman.

^c Groom, or feeder of the mules.

by every opprobrious name he can think of, and invariably concluding with—*maldita sea la puta de la madre que te pario, alma de mierda, mal rayo te parta* ;^a after which, he turns himself calmly to his companions to finish the joke he had begun, or share their noisy mirth.

In this manner they gallop the whole way, amidst the noise of bells, and the cries of the mayoral, who never ceases calling out, in a varying tone, the names of the mules, running rapidly over the two first syllables, making a start on the third, and lingering on the fourth ; as *Coro-ne-laaa, Gene-ra-laaa, Capi-ta-naaa, Man-che-gaaa, &c.*

Whilst the coach was loading on the above occasion, one of the zagales, a young Andalusian, with all the buoyant spirits of his country, and that impudent but winning look, which these rustic wits usually have, was diverting himself with the doleful countenance and shri-

^a This speech does not bear translating.

velled appearance of a French emigrant priest, to whom my father had given an asylum in our house. After a thousand antics, he came up to me, and glancing his lively expressive eyes towards the melancholy figure which had been standing all the time fixed like a statue in the middle of the *portal*,^a "Pray, Señorito," said he with a wink, "tell me, where the devil did you get that thing there? It looks as if it had run away from some niche in the cloister of St. Dominic. At all events, I think he would represent excellently well a soul in purgatory, but that gentlemen of his cloth must either be saved at once, or go to *Pero Votero*.^b Don't you think so?"

At this moment, the priest, suspecting the rogue was laughing at him, approached, but the zagal dexterously changed the conversation, and pretended to be relating his own history.

^a Porch, or entrance into a house.

^b Literally, Swearing Peter, or Old Nick.

“First,” said he, “my name is Anton, and I am an Andalusian from Seville, of which you know the proverb,—He who has not seen Seville has not seen a wonder.^a—There is a tower there, La Giralda, from the top of which you can see half the world ; and a whole cavalry regiment,

^a The Spanish proverb is *Quien no ha visto á Sevilla no ha visto maravilla*. The Andalusians, like the Gascons of France, are great boasters, and hardly utter a sentence without some extravagant hyperbole. This is particularly true of the lower class. To ridicule this habit a story is told of an Andalusian preacher, who, conscious of his exaggerating propensities, begged his attendant to pull his habit, when, in the course of his sermon, he went too far. The subject was the punishment of the wicked. In describing the horrors of their abode, he said, there was in it a serpent a hundred yards long. The attendant, thinking this required correction, pulled his habit.—“I beg to correct myself,” said the preacher ; “I mean to say sixty yards.”—The attendant thought that sixty yards required another pull.—“Hearers!” said the preacher again, “it is probable that the serpent is not quite so long : but certainly it is not less than forty yards.”—The attendant pulled his habit again.—“By the holy Virgin!” exclaimed the preacher, turning sharply round, “another pull, and you’ll leave it without a tail!” This story is so common in Spain, that when any one exaggerates, the person who is near is requested to pull him by the coat.

eight hundred strong, with their horses drawn up in line of battle, may manœuvre on the top of it without any difficulty !”

“ Señorito,” cried the mozo, “ pray pull him by the jacket.”

“ I have had the honour,” continued Anton, without minding what the other said, “ of serving the king our lord, and the folly of serving him well. I was zagal to one of the coaches of his suite, and one day the mules which usually drew his Majesty’s carriage, were harnessed to that which carried the Colonel, who, you know, plays so well upon the guitar. The mules, no doubt perceiving their disgrace, revenged the insult, when they were half way to San Lorenzo, and threw their load into a ditch. If this had done its duty as well as the mules, the Colonel might have joined the soul of his grandmother in the regions below ; as it was, he only broke his head. But I, who had no share of the mules’ pride, was obliged to take to my heels, or it is probable their Majesties would

have done me the honour to decorate with my person the first tree of the *Fresnada*.^a I went back to the *parador*,^b and there took as master this good Christian of a Mayoral, who pays little, but swears loud, and drives poor Anton about like a foot-ball; forgetting that he too might have been a mayoral by this time, and of the king's carriage into the bargain, but for the mules' pride; for I assure you, upon the faith of an honest man, that there is not another zagal in the whole Christian world to match me."

"Ay," cried the other, "in lying."

"I respect in thee my betters," returned Anton, bowing. "But, Señorito, did you ever in your travels see any mules of the Holy Father that could bear a comparison with ours? The Coronela that you see there, came out of the royal stables, because she had lost one eye; had she lost both, she might have been created a member of the Council of Castile! The Capi-

^a A little wood near the Escorial. ^b The inn.

tana too, her companion, has singular merits—nay, I'm quite in love with her rare qualities. She knows better than a clock, when it's noon, and asks for her barley as cleverly as a christian could; and if they give her none, she says *nones*,^a and will not stir an inch from her place for love or money."

"How old is she?" enquired the French priest gravely.

"I did not see her foaled," replied Anton, "but I believe her dam was older. The Manchega," said he, proceeding with his descriptions, "is a mule fit for a monarch: she is not so great a conjuror as Capitana, to find out the precise dinner hour; but she is as gentle as a lamb; and as for kicking—she never thinks of such a thing unless you affront her! And then the Generala—the dromedary I should say—look what legs she has! I despair of ever seeing

^a Odds; in Spanish, in cases like the above, it means an unqualified refusal.

the like again. If you'll believe me, the other day, as I was taking her to the river to drink, she gave a leap—Holy Trinity, what a leap! I really don't exaggerate when I say that she cleared the top of San Blas' church, and went cantering away through the clouds, till I thought we should never reach *tierra firme* again; but the best of the story was—"

At this moment the Mayoral, mounting the box, at once put a stop to Anton's panegyrics on the mules; and all of us having taken our seats, the zagal seized the two first mules by the bit, uttered the cry of departure, which the mules obeyed by setting off at full gallop, and then jumping lightly upon the box, gaily sung out the *Contrabandista*.^a

In less than an hour we reached our house at Cigales. Here the female visitors took up their quarters with my sisters, in a different part of the house from that which we inhabited

^a An Andalusian song so called.

with our friends. Both sets of apartments, however, were on the first floor, the lower and the higher part of the house being for the servants and the *vendimiadores*.^a The number of these last generally amounted to sixty, between *capataces*,^b *coritos*,^c *pisadores*,^d *trotadores*,^e *vendimiadores*,^f *covanilleros*,^g and *cargadores*;^h a sort of hierarchy, with which, perhaps, my English reader is not acquainted, and which I will explain, if he pleases, by introducing him to each of these gentlemen.

Between two and three in the morning, the crowing of the cock answers the same purpose as the tolling of the bell does with a community of monks; it is the signal for rising. 'The

^a Vintagers, the generical name. ^b Overseers.

^c The men who carry the stems from the pressing places, or, as they are called, *lagares*, to the wine cellars.

^d The men who tread the grapes.

^e Trotters, men who convey the grapes from the vineyard to the lagar.

^f Gatherers.

^g Basket-bearers.

^h Loaders.

capataces are the first who obey the cock's call ; for on them devolves the care of seeing that all do their duty whether in the house or abroad.

“ *Ave Maria purissima* ”—cry these men as they enter the apartments where both women and men sleep pell-mell—“ come ! up ! up ! shake off your sloth ! why, the cock has crowed this half hour ! ”

As all their bedding consists of a straw mattress for each, they wisely lay themselves down in their clothes at night, and consequently do not lose much time at their toilet in the morning. They are up at a jump, and surrounding the capataces, say a Paternoster, an Ave-Maria, and a Gloria Patri, for their morning prayers.

“ Let the covanilleros take their baskets,” cries one of the capataces,—which is the signal for formation. They then immediately divide all the vintagers into cuadrillas,^a if the vineyards

^a Parties.

happen to be small, and each places himself at the head of one ; but if the vineyards are large, they all go together. Meantime the trotadores have been busy in saddling their beasts, and loading them with the large baskets. They all now sally forth ; the women with their timbrels, which they begin to strike as soon as they leave the house, accompanying themselves with the voice, in which they are joined by all the male vintagers till they reach the vineyard.

Here the instruments are laid aside, and the vendimiadores commence gathering the grapes ; for which purpose each is furnished with a small basket, which he hands to the covanillero when it is full, who takes it to the large baskets at the entrance of the vineyard, into which he throws the grapes. Here the cargadores are busy in tying these baskets, and loading them on the backs of the mules and asses, that are to convey the grapes to the pressing places. As soon as the animals are loaded, the trotadore draws from his leather belt a little switch, gene-

rally taken from the ash-tree, which he wears as a sword when not actually using it, and applies it to the poor beasts, so as to make them keep up a constant trot, till they reach the lagar ; from which custom he derives his appellation.

The lagar is a place in which the grapes are pressed. It has generally three different compartments—one in which the grapes are actually pressed, standing higher than the others, with a slanting floor, to allow the juice of the grapes to run down into the second—which is a large square well, containing several thousand *cantaras*^a of wine ;—and the third is a kind of room, close by the first compartment, where the refuse of the grapes is thrown, after being perfectly pressed. The pisadores, so called because they tread the grapes before they put them under the press, receive them from the trotadores, and perform the work of treading with their naked legs up to the knees in grapes, while the Cori-

^a A wine measure of thirty-two pints.

tos are filling their wine-skins with stem, and carrying it to the *bodegas*,^a to throw it into the *cubas*,^b which are in those subterraneous places.

Such are the various offices, and appropriate names of those merry vintagers, to whom sobriety and good behaviour need not be recommended; for the generality of them are examples of both. The utmost good humour and gaiety reigns among them. It is really pleasant to see these good people return home after sunset, performing rustic dances, singing, and capering, with as much buoyancy of spirits as if they were coming home from a fair or a romeria. I have often stood listening with delight to the distant sound of their voices, mingled with the noise of their timbrels and castanets.

Every evening, about the time of their return,

^a Subterraneous places where the wine is kept; generally they are on the heaths near the villages.

^b Large casks, each containing from four to eight hundred cantaros.

all our party used to go and enjoy the *fresco*^a (as the phrase is) in the direction of the vineyards where the vintagers had been gathering grapes. No sooner did they perceive us, than they ran to us, and taking the children in their arms, carried us in triumph to the villages, singing and gambolling all the way. On their arrival home, they all sat round a large fire-place in the kitchen, and received each a large basin of *sopas de ajo*,^b a plate of beans, a piece of cheese, a pound of bread, and a pint of wine, for their supper, or rather for their dinner, as all they eat during the day is a piece of bread, and as many grapes as they please. The *capataces*, *pisadores*, *coritos*, and *trotadores*, however, had their *olla*;^c consisting of meat, sausages, bacon, beans, and cabbage, which they ate at the table where the *cachican*^d and his wife presided, and gave out

^a The cool breeze.

^b Garlic soup.

^c A mixture of good things boiled together in a large pot, of which Sancho Panza, an excellent judge in such matters, was very fond, as may be seen in Don Quixote.

^d Chief overseer, or country steward.

the portions with the most scrupulous equality, keeping up an air of consequence very suitable to the high station in which they were placed.

The manner in which we were accustomed to employ our time, during the two months we usually spent in this village, was as agreeable as need be. Early in the morning, my father, my brother Raymundo, our little friends, and myself, mounted our rozinantes and dapples, and proceeded to the river Pisuerga, which runs within two miles of the village, for the purpose of fishing, each provided with his fishing-rod.

About one o'clock the ladies arrived, bringing with them a cold but abundant dinner, which we took in some of the delightful spots by the river-side that throughout the year preserve there an eternal verdure, and under some of the thick-leaved trees that shade its slopes. Here we were frequently joined by several of our town friends, who, like ourselves, had come to Cigales to the vintage; and among them were generally to be numbered some musical folks, who

of course did not forget their instruments on such occasions. A dance was very soon got up, and the whole party joined in it till they were fatigued, and then laid themselves on the cooling grass to repose. Towards evening, we used to return home, singing the whole way *boleras*, *seguidillas*, *tiranas*, and all sorts of songs, while guitars, violins, flutes, clarionets, and flageolets formed the counterpart to our voices. On our arrival at home, a *refresco*^a was served. The evening friends, who formed the *tertulia*,^b came ; and the elderly people, retiring to the card-room to play at *tresillo*^c or at whist, left the young people undisturbed possessors of the hall ; when the music immediately played a waltz, a country-dance, or a gabota ; or the cry “ of forfeit ” resounded through the hall ; after which, the amusements of the evening concluded with a supper.

^a Entertainment given to visitors of iced drinks, sweet-meats and chocolate.

^b Evening party.

^c Ombre.

CHAPTER II.

By how much unexpected, by so much
We must awake endeavour for defence,
For courage mounteth with occasion.

SHAKSPEARE.

RETURNING now to the particular period at which my present history commences,—on the day after our arrival at Cigales, we all went on a shooting party to the wood; and as it generally happens on such occasions, although we all sallied out in a body, it was not long before we separated, each allured by some accidental circumstance connected with his pursuit. In the course of my wanderings, I followed a path that led out into the open country, and there met Raymundo on horseback, who had just been giving chace to a fox;—“but whose pur-

suit," said he, " I gave up in coming near Cabezon, having met on the road of Burgos an elegant equipage, and in it one of the most beautiful creatures my eyes ever beheld, accompanied by a middle-aged gentleman. She was looking out of the carriage window, and pointing with a book she held in her hand to where the Pisuerga winds round Ruyseñor's Island, the favourite spot of our boyhood. Her large, fine black eyes beamed with sensibility, and animated all her features. As she expressed her delight at the prospect before her, just as I rode up, I heard her say—" Dear uncle, look at that beautiful little islet. How happily one might pass a whole life there."—" What !" cried the uncle, " like a hermit ?"—" Not exactly so," returned she, " but in the company of those one loves." At this moment I came into a line with the carriage window, and saluted them by a respectful motion of the head. " Pray, Sir," asked the gentleman, " do you inhabit this vicinity ?" I replied that I did. " Perhaps,

then," said he, "you will be able to inform me to whom that little island, which we see beyond those water mills, belongs."—"To Doña Teresa Guzman, wife of Don Ignacio Lara."—"Ah! indeed," exclaimed he; "Isabelita, you will then have an opportunity of examining its beauties on the spot." He then thanked me for my information, the postilions galloped on, and I soon lost sight of them. Were it not that I am so entirely in love with that matchless beauty, Angelica, I could really persuade myself that I never beheld a being more worthy of my adoration than this Isabelita. Beautiful little creature! with her curling locks as black as ebony, lightly floating on her white shoulders, and with that sweet smiling mouth and those coral lips, she appeared to me like Aurora in her car dispelling the morning vapours, and infusing happiness into the hearts of mortals.

"*Que le diable m'emporte!*" exclaimed I, laughing at his rhapsody, "if you are not in love with *her* too!"

Raymundo was now in his sixteenth year, and my senior by thirteen months. Being the first-born male child of the family and consequently the *mayorazgo*,^a our parents, as is generally the case under similar circumstances, made upon him their experiment in education, and adopted mildness and indulgent treatment as their principle of action in forming his temper. This plan answered very well during his infancy ; but when he arrived at an age which is perhaps improperly called the age of reason, and in which the passions rage in all their fierceness, they found it a difficult matter to follow up their original plan. Still, however, they thought it might be carried with equal success through youth, as it had been through infancy, and consequently they made no material change in it.

Passing by for the present the results of this treatment, I must continue my narrative. In

^a The heir of a noble family.

the evening of the day in question we young people went to take a stroll into a thick wood, at a short distance from our house. The moon shone brightly, though now and then her beams were intercepted by the thin clouds that floated in the atmosphere; but the silence of the night was unbroken by the buzz of men, for every villager had now retired to his repose, after the toils of the day.

Whilst my sisters and their companions were amusing themselves in singing, as they walked slowly arm in arm, their young voices forming the sweetest of harmonies, I, almost unconsciously, struck into a different path, which led towards the road to town. I had nearly reached the end of the wood, where the road begins, when I heard the trampling of horses' feet at a little distance from me. In looking from behind a thicket which stood before me, I was surprised to see four men mounted, and armed with weapons, which, from their glitter, appeared to

be carbines. "Halt here," said one of them to his companions, "and prepare your arms. I myself saw the carriage leave town at a quick pace, and it can't be above twenty minutes before it reaches this spot."

"But are you quite sure," cried another, "that it will pass this way, and not give us the slip by striking into another road? You know what we should lose by missing it. Besides the booty we should find in it, the ten thousand ducats as a reward is no trifle."

"There's no denying that he acts liberally," said another; "but then his victims are worth a good price. But I can't help being concerned about what may happen to the young lady; for though we have orders to spare her life, a chance ball can't be controlled."

"Zounds!" exclaimed another, "let her patron Saint protect her, if he wishes to have her alive. Our duty is to kill all, that none may be left to tell tales. For my part, I'm not so

fond of the gallows as to spare others to ruin myself. By Judas ! if my carbine don't do its duty, my dagger will, I promise you."

Though I could not hear these plans of murder without horror, yet, instead of intimidating, they did but inspire me with a boldness I had never before felt. I resolved, at all hazards, to save the intended victims, and immediately left the wood, taking a circuitous path that led to a *lagar* which is on the road to Valladolid. I arrived there almost out of breath, afraid lest I should be too late for the carriage ; but fortunately I had just arrived, when I heard the bells of the mules, and the voices of the zagales singing a tirana. " Stop ! stop !" cried I, going towards them, " your lives are all in danger if you proceed a step beyond this spot."

The postilions pulled up the mules, and a gentleman from inside the carriage inquired the matter.

" Sir," said I, " I have this moment seen four armed men, well mounted, in ambush in

the wood." I then repeated to him all that I had heard them say, and entreated him to take a different road.

"We are only going to Cigales," said the gentleman, "and perhaps the wood you allude to is beyond, or on one side of the village, in which case we need not fear them."

"If you follow this road, the wood must be entered before you reach Cigales; but there is another I can show you by which it may be avoided."

"May I inquire," asked the gentleman, "to whom we are indebted for this important information?"

"To Don Esteban Lara."

"Heavens!" exclaimed he, "this family are intended for my saviours!—Boy!" said he, addressing himself to the zagal, "open this door quickly!"—This was no sooner done than he jumped out and closed me in his arms.

"Sir," said I, "we have no time to lose. If they should suspect any chance of disappoint-

ment, they may all come this way. Let us immediately leave the road, and take off the bells from the mules."

This advice was followed, and the gentleman invited me to ride with them, if I was not going in an opposite direction. I told him that my intention was to return home immediately, and that I had come to that place only to warn them of the danger.—“Then, my young deliverer,” said he, “I will have the pleasure of accompanying you thither. I come to Cigales purposely to see your father. I have a debt of gratitude of which to acquit myself towards him, and to which you have now added a new one. Let me present you to my niece Doña Isabella Torrealva,” added he, handing me into the carriage. She leaned forward to salute me as I entered, and the moon-beams shining full through the windows, showed me the loveliest Grecian face I ever beheld: pale, from the alarm she felt, but with such an expression of sweetness and intelli-

gence, such a fascinating smile, such large eloquent dark eyes, that for some moments I was struck dumb with admiration. At last recovering my senses a little—"Torrealva !" exclaimed I, "then you are the Marquis of Moncayo ?"

"I am," said he ; "and I am Marquis of Moncayo only through your father's noble conduct. He it was who restored me to my title and estates, or I should still have been poor and unfortunate. To your father I owe my wealth and honour, and to you my life."

"I am but too happy—I think myself fortunate," stammered I. Then, ashamed of my embarrassment, I leaned out to direct the position. In a quarter of an hour's time we reached our house in safety ; and no sooner was the visitor announced, than my father, with our whole family and friends, came out to receive him. The Marquis pressed him in his arms, and introduced his niece to my mother and sisters, who all embraced her. After these

salutations, we entered the hall, where there was a table laid out with game, fruits, &c. to which we all sat down to sup.

My brother, who immediately recognized the Marquis, and his niece, as the gentleman and lady he had met near Cabezon, came forward; and Don Lorenzo expressed an agreeable surprise at this unexpected meeting; whilst I could not help confessing to myself, that the picture drawn by Raymundo, of Isabella, and which I had thought so extravagant, was but tame and inadequate to its subject. His Aurora seemed to me scarcely good enough to be compared with this lovely Psyche, who was before me.

It was not till after supper that the whole affair of the ambush was explained; when every one of the party congratulated our noble guests on their providential escape, and my father immediately sent several of our servants, and some of the Vendimiadores, who volunteered to go armed to the spot where the assassins had placed themselves. But in about an hour they all re-

turned, bringing intelligence that they had not seen any one, though they had carefully examined the spot in question. One circumstance, however, which they had ascertained by their torches, indicated the having taken the road of Valladolid—the impressions of the horses' hoofs were left on a sandy bank close to the very spot I had described, and were all in that direction.

Next day my father sent a messenger to town to the corregidor,^a with an account of what had happened on the preceding night, and requesting that enquiries should immediately be made to discover the assassins and their instigator, while the whole village was also set on the watch to prevent any further attempt being made on the Marquis; but in a few days these precautions appeared useless, for notwithstanding the most strict enquiries, both on the part of the police, and ourselves, to discover either of them, no traces whatever could be found; so that some

^a A police magistrate appointed by the king.

were inclined to think the blow was intended for some one else.

As it is desirable, in connection with the after part of my story, that the reader should be fully acquainted with the extent of the Marquis's obligations to my father, I will, in the following chapter, give an outline of the famous cause between Don Lorenzo Torrealva, and his brother, Don Facundo, tried at the *Chancilleria* of Valladolid, and of which Don Ignacio, my father, was the relator.*

* An advocate who reports to the judges the merits of the cause, as stated by the two counsel, and who, at the same time, delivers his own opinion to aid the judges in their decisions.

CHAPTER III.

Temed, temed, que no hay miseria alguna,

Donde no haga otra suerte la fortuna !

Argenis y Poliarco.—Calderon.

Ah ! thou hast cause to fear ! for 'tis the fate of woe, to be followed
by deeper ills !

WHEN Charles IV. declared war against France, in 1793, Don Lorenzo Torrealva, Marquis of Moncayo, at the head of his regiment, repaired to Catalonia, to join the Count de la Union, General in Chief of the Spanish army. In the battle of Pons de Molins, in which the Count was killed, the Marquis was left for dead on the field of battle, and reported so to the court of Madrid.

Some French soldiers, who visited the field after the battle, for the sake of plunder, on depriving him of his valuables and uniform, found

him still alive, and conveyed him, with some other wounded, to the French hospitals at Perpignan, and thence to Provence, where he remained till the conclusion of the war, without finding an opportunity to acquaint his family with his unhappy fate. Being then set at liberty, with the rest of his fellow-prisoners, and having embarked from Marseilles, in a small transport, for his native land, they were already within sight of Barcelona, when an Algerine corsair fell in with them, boarded their little vessel, sunk it, and carried them all to Algiers, to be sold for slaves.

For nearly ten years, the Marquis endured all the horrors of slavery, without having once had the consolation of an answer to the repeated letters he had written to his family. At last he succeeded in making his escape, and returned to Agreda, the town where he and his ancestors had their principal family residence.

Here he found great and sad alterations. When he quitted it to join the Count de la

Union, he had left his wife in a state of far advanced pregnancy, and an infant son eighteen months old, both under the care of his second brother, Don Facundo Torrealva. The Marchioness, who was a young and beautiful woman, tenderly attached to her husband, received, a few weeks before her confinement, the fatal news of his supposed death, and felt it so keenly, that a few days afterwards, she and the child she carried in her womb were no more. The other infant, heir to the title of Moncayo, was sent by Don Facundo to a nurse ; but dying shortly after, he himself assumed the title of Marquis, and took possession of the family estates.

On Don Lorenzo's arrival at Agreda, he presented himself successively to his former friends, who, owing to the great change his whole person had undergone, did not recognise him. He, then, finding that his third brother was also dead, and that none but Don Facundo remained to declare his identity, set off for Madrid, where the new Marquis had resided ever since his

assumption of the title of Moncayo, and where he had become one of the most skilful courtiers of the court of Godoy. On presenting himself to his brother, the latter professed to consider him as an impostor, and immediately commenced such violent proceedings against him, that it excited the suspicions of Don Lorenzo's old friends, who thought, that if Don Facundo was thoroughly convinced of this man's imposture, he need not raise against him such a violent persecution to secure his own rights. They therefore agreed among themselves, urged, perhaps, as much by sentiments of envy at Don Facundo's power, as by a feeling of justice towards an old friend, to come forward and support Don Lorenzo's claims, if certain questions referring to private matters, known only to them and the Marquis, were satisfactorily answered by him. Don Lorenzo's answers left them no room to doubt his identity, and they lost no time in lending him their assistance to recover the title and estates of Moncayo.

Don Facundo, on his side, set in motion the great springs that Godoy's favour, his own influence, and that of his numerous and powerful friends placed at his disposal. He began by bribing, either with presents or honors, the judges, and every one else connected with his cause,—than which nothing was easier, from the total corruption which prevailed in the tribunals, as well as in every other branch of the state, at that period. His efforts, however, were thwarted by Don Ignacio, who remained incorruptible amidst that mass of impurity. His character for talent, honor, and integrity, was so well established with the public, and had such a weight with the judges (most of whom were young men without any knowledge or experience, who had received their offices from Godoy by the influence of some Camarista)^a that his hints alone were considered by them as laws, which they dared not infringe, lest they

^a Maid of honour to the queen.

should bring down upon themselves the execration of the public.

Don Facundo, aware of the influence exerted by Don Ignacio over the minds of the judges, and fearing that, notwithstanding their promises, they would not have sufficient courage to set at defiance his arguments, and the public opinion, as well as the mass of facts which he knew would be adduced on the trial, left nothing untried to gain his suffrage. He wrote letters to him, in which all the springs of flattery and intimidation were touched, accompanying them with magnificent presents, and most splendid promises.

These insidious letters were answered with that manly frankness which characterized the virtuous person to whom they were addressed ; and the presents were returned unopened. Unmindful of the consequences, or of Don Facundo's malignant, intriguing, and revengeful spirit, Don Ignacio was determined to steer through no other course than that of duty. Consequently,

on the day of the pleading, he displayed all those powers of eloquence with which he was so highly gifted, and demonstrated, in the most forcible manner, the cruelty and injustice of an unnatural brother, who, as it was clearly proved in the course of the suit, knew of the existence and captivity of his brother, the Marquis ; but, through the most base and selfish motives of interest, suffered him to languish ten years in slavery, and now wished to dispossess him of his rights.

The result of Don Ignacio's strenuous efforts was, that Don Facundo lost his law-suit, to the great satisfaction of all the friends of justice and the laws ; and his appeal to the council of Castile was also non-suited, as Don Lorenzo's identity had been too well established in the Chancilleria of Valladolid to admit of the least doubt being thrown upon it. Notwithstanding this defeat, and the desertion of several of his quondam friends and parasites, he still managed to retain his post of Camarista of Castile, as much by

seasonably employing some of the money he had plundered, as by invariably pursuing a course of meanness and intrigue.

As it is to the virtuous Don Ignacio that I owe my existence, and as he plays a very prominent part in these memoirs, I shall here give a brief sketch of his private and public character.

Don Ignacio Lara was the eldest son of an *hidalgo*, who possessed large landed estates, and consequently the *mayorazgo*. Contrary to the established rules in Spain, by which all that the first-born child of a noble family needs know is how to crack his whip, swear, be insolent, give himself great airs, gamble, run into every sort of extravagance and dissipation, and, in short, practice all the vices of the wealthy, without omitting those of the uneducated, low rabble—Don Ignacio received his education at the Colegio Mayor of Valladolid, where no plebeians could be admitted, and where every one was obliged to prove that none of his ancestors, from the remotest generations,—if possible, ever since Don

Rodrigo, the last of the Goths,—had been a tradesman, a mechanic, a servant, a descendant from Jews, Moors, Indians, or Guanchos, nor had been punished by the Holy Inquisition. This ordeal, (which is very adequately called *pruebas*^a) was indispensable to be passed through in these aristocratic colleges, which having been originally intended for students in divinity, law, and medicine, were afterwards, by papal bulls, and royal decrees, erected into universities.

Here, then, it was, that Don Ignacio pursued his studies ; and after obtaining several minor academic honors and degrees, was at length installed doctor in law.

I ought to observe here, *en passant*, that, among his fellow collegians, was Don Facundo,—at that epoch, not so great a courtier as since, and doubtless a better friend.

In those times, in Spain, it was considered almost a disgrace for a mayorargo to exercise the honorable profession of advocate,—as hidalgos

^a Proofs or trials.

of the true blue blood ought to be nothing below judges. But Don Ignacio had the wisdom and courage to act in contrariety to this notion. He entered into the Royal College of Advocates at Valladolid, of which he speedily ranked among the brightest ornaments; and his talents as a counsellor drew upon him several honorable employments from the Chancilleria and from the Council of Castile, in which he shewed himself a model of skill, integrity, and justice.

His patriotism too, was so ardent, that not only his whole fortune, but his life was devoted to the service of his country. For many years he laboured incessantly to overcome the prejudices of the agriculturists of his province, and succeeded at last in introducing many improvements, both in their implements and mode of cultivation. He was one of the most active members of the Royal Society of Friends of the Country, Protector of the Junta of Public Instruction, and one of the founders of the

Academies, by royal order afterwards changed into Colleges of agriculture, chemistry, geography, surgery, and of theoretico-practical jurisprudence.

In all these important occupations, undismayed by the difficulties which ignorance, prejudice, and folly constantly interposed, his exertions for the public good were unremitting, and if he had not always the happiness of seeing his liberal plans adopted, he had at least the consolation of receiving the approbation of the more enlightened of his countrymen.

A man so anxious for the improvement of his country, was not likely to neglect the education of his children. Neither trouble nor expense was spared to bring us all up in a manner that accorded rather with his own liberal ideas than with the common routine of education. In this respect, indeed, he was more strict than was quite agreeable to me in my early days ; but his commands, though firm, were so mild and

reasonable, that from obeying him as a father, we soon listened to him as a friend, and readily entered into all his views.

Independently of the religious principles which he instilled into our minds from our earliest infancy, he neglected no opportunity of convincing us, that the virtues he recommended were founded on utility, and had for their object our own happiness. He taught us to weigh in the scale of reason the pleasure and pain which accompany every action, and thus made us sensible that bad actions are sure to be productive of evil to the practiser, and good ones of real pleasure and satisfaction.

Thus we had in him a pattern not only of every amiable domestic virtue, but of all that is good and useful in public life. Tenderly as he was beloved at home, he was no less respected abroad by all classes of persons; by those who could appreciate superior talents, firm integrity, extensive and varied knowledge, he was sincerely and warmly esteemed; his rank,

fortune, and mild urbanity of manners, claimed the respect and attentions of those who look no farther than externals ; while his universal kindness and benevolence endeared him to all his inferiors.

Such was the character of the being to whom I owe not only my life, but what is still more valuable, my principles and education.

Having given a sketch of my father's character, were I to omit saying a few words of my mother, it might seem as if she had nothing to recommend her in the eyes of her children ; which was very far from being the case ; for she possessed in a high degree many of the united charms of the female character ; among others, a most attractive grace in her manners, and no small share of beauty. The activity of her mind gave a charming variety to the expression of her countenance. Her fine and slender shape was inimitably formed, and her carriage imparted to her whole person a character of imposing dignity. But what rendered her most

endearing was her excellent heart, and her inexhaustible and unwearied kindness.

She married my father against her will, in obedience to her parents' commands, and yet never was there a happier union. This is a circumstance which speaks volumes for the amiableness of her disposition, as well as the sweetness of my father's temper. If she had any^a foible, it was one very pardonable in a woman—a certain aristocratic pride, which made her dwell, often too long, on her four-winded^a ancestors. My father strove hard to eradicate from her mind a prejudice unworthy of a woman of her talent, and ridiculed the idea by demonstrating in an incontrovertible manner, that money in our days would buy a dukedom for a Jack-ketch, and that nobility was not worth talking about, unless accompanied by those exalted vir-

^a *Nobles por los quatro vientos, ó costados*, are those who during several generations, four at least, have allied themselves by marriage to females also of noble houses.

tues which ought to adorn it, and in company with which it alone appears to advantage.

“ All that is very true,” would she reply ;
“ but, my love, allow me to esteem myself fortunate, in having in my veins the blue blood of the Guzmans.”

“ With all my heart,” would my father reply ;
and there the matter generally ended

CHAPTER IV.

“ O quanta dulce imagen,
Cuantas tiernas palabras
Alli diré, que el labio
Quiere decir laa y calla !
Mas favorable acaso
Que pienso yo à mis ansias
Soureirà ? quien sabe
Si mis carinos paga ?”—CIENFUEGOS.

SOME days after the Marquis's arrival at Cigales, it was resolved that we should all go to Ruyseñor's Island, the spot in the Pisuerga so much admired by Isabella, to spend the day there, and shew her all its beauties. Such of my readers as are acquainted with the effects of incipient love, will not be surprised to learn that I rejoiced at this more than any one of the party ; for I flattered myself that during this

little excursion I might more easily find an opportunity for a tête-à-tête with Isabella, as she would be less engaged with my sisters and their friends.

This opportunity soon offered itself. Isabella was fond of riding, as was also my sister, Marienne, who was about her own age. The rest being younger and more timid, some preferred the more docile animals, the donkeys, and others the carriage. It was, therefore, resolved that Marienne and Isabella, should ride on horseback accompanied by Raymundo and myself. Before we set out, I desired Raymundo to leave Isabella under my care, and take Marienne under his.

“ So,” said he with an arch smile, “ the little tyrant has found his way into *your* heart too, eh ?”

“ Nay,” cried I, “ into my very soul : I now feel how a woman may engross all our thoughts, and make us forget our own existence.”

“ Well !” returned he, “ you see then at

last that it is useless for us to strive against the charms of a beautiful woman. How often have I told you that we were born for love!—that love is the only natural passion implanted in the breast of man,—that all others are foreign to our nature, and the result of the depraved state of society. The best feelings of our hearts have their origin in love, without it there is no civilization, man becomes worse than a wild beast, and the whole world is plunged into wretchedness and crime. I hold it as a moral principle, that he who is not in love cannot be an honest man, that he must be void of generosity, kindness, and benevolence, which are nothing else but modifications of love.—I rejoice that you feel it at last. You will now be more tolerant, and less moralizing.’

“ Well, well,” said I ; “ don’t forget to leave me alone with Isabella.”

The word of departure being given, I hastened to assist my charmer in mounting her steed.

I trembled as I gave her my hand ; for although I felt within me an irresistible power impelling me towards her, I grew more timid as I approached. She, however, received my attentions with such a pleasing expression of manner, that it encouraged me a little, and made me hope there was in it something more than habitual politeness or amiability ; yet when we were in the open field, and entirely by ourselves, I scarcely dared to turn my eyes on her ; and when I did, and they met hers, my blood mounted to my cheeks, and I felt my face in a flame. After she had addressed some questions to me, which I answered in a faltering voice, I made one or two attempts to speak ; but my unconnected words hardly expressed an idea, and I could only blush, utter monosyllables, and look foolish.

At length unable to bear this embarrassing situation any longer, I called to Raymundo, whom I had, previously to our departure, so

earnestly desired to keep away.—“ Well,” inquired he in a whisper, “ have you poured out your whole soul ?”

“ No,” said I, “ for I am a fool, and what is worse, she must think me one.”

At these words he burst into a loud laugh—“ Isabella,” said he afterwards to her, “ you must have been much entertained with my brother’s conversation ; for by his earnest gesticulations, I suppose he was making some very vivid descriptions of the country and the pleasures we enjoy.”

“ Don Raymundo,” exclaimed she, “ you jest. He has scarcely deigned to open his lips once since you left us.”

“ Indeed !” exclaimed he, “ what can be the reason of such strange conduct ? Can you tell me ?”

“ Upon my word,” replied she, “ I can’t, unless it be that he is not well pleased with his company.”

“ Ah ! Doña Isabella,” cried I hastily, “ par-

don me. It is I think your charms . . . no man," . . . and I could get no further.

" Pardon me" repeated my brother laughing, " it is . . . I think . . . your charms . . . no man . . . We are now quite *au fait* to the matter ;—no further explanation is required. Yet I'll venture to affirm, that under these in themselves unintelligible words, Isabella discovers some meaning. Now tell us the truth. Don't you think they have a meaning, and a deep one too?"

" I do not possess the art of guessing," replied she ; " but I should think they had a meaning ; for from what I have hitherto seen of Don Esteban, he seems a very unlikely person to say unmeaning things."

" Señorita," said I, my face as red as scarlet, " you are pleased to say so."

" And to think it too," added she.—I was on the point of giving her another laconic reply, when cries from behind us of—" Away ! take care of yourselves !" made us look back : and we

saw a bull coming towards us at full gallop. The fierceness of those animals in Castile is such, that when they quit the herd in this manner, they seldom return till their horns are stained with blood, either of animals or of man.

“ Fly instantly !” exclaimed I to Isabella, while my brother and I halted, and prepared our guns, which we carried like a bow across our shoulders. The bull^a came now in front of us, but instead of rushing to the attack, he made a sudden pause, as if to measure the distance between him and his victims. We were on the point of firing, when, whirling quickly round, he returned like lightning towards the herd, called by the noise of the herdsman, who struck his hands against a large leathern belt that girded his waist. We followed the bull, and saw the herdsman waiting for him with an air of resolution that nothing but long practice could give ; his arms extended and crossed be-

^a The manner here described of securing a bull is very common in Castile.

fore his breast, and the hands, the palms of which were turned in front, opened, ready to seize the animal's horns when he should come sufficiently near him for that purpose. The bull rushed upon him with a tremendous impetus, and in an instant afterwards he was stretched upon his back. The herdsman had caught his horns, and with a twist of the arms had laid him on the earth. He then tied around his horns a rope that went through the hole of a large stake, fixed on the ground, and, taking the end of it, let the bull go ; then he pulled the rope till he brought his forehead close to the stake. In this state the animal could do nothing, but roar and tear the ground with his feet. The herdsman, then taking a long pole, at the end of which was an iron pin, punished him till he conquered his fury.

We now returned to our party, who were re-assembling after having been dispersed by the above circumstance ; and proceeded towards the river, where we embarked, and in a few minutes

landed in Ruyseñor's Island ; which I proposed should henceforth be called Isabella's Island, in honour of the guest who now lent it new charms. This was unanimously agreed upon, and I received from Isabella in recompence, a look which penetrated my very soul—"Oh !" said I to myself, "that I could summon sufficient resolution to tell her all my heart feels—the ardent love I have conceived for her—the enchantment produced by those eyes beaming with intellect and gentleness !"

Raymundo, who had remarked that look, whispered to me,—“You may set me down as a fool in love matters, if you have not already made an impression. Only shake off that foolish timidity of your's, and I will procure you the best opportunity in the world to make your declaration.”

“How ?” inquired I.

“Go,” said he, “to the cave in the west part of the island, and, when you hear my whistle, begin to sing the Timid Lover :

Las voces me faltan,
Tiemblo si adverti
Que tus bellos ojos
Se fixan en mi.
¡ Ah! si tu zagala
Quisieras oir
Mis tristes lamentos
Yo fuera feliz !^a

—“ and I will take Isabella with me towards the spot, and induce her to enter the cave. You must seat yourself on the wooden bench that stands near the entrance, with your back to it, chiseling her name on the wall, and pretending you do not observe our intrusion. Afterwards I shall find means to leave you by yourselves.”

I pressed Raymundo's hand, and after accompanying Isabella to various parts of the islet along with some of my sister's friends, showing them the romantic spots which it offered,

^a My voice fails me, I tremble if I see thy lovely eyes are turned on me. Beautiful shepherdess! if thou wouldst listen to my tender lamentations, how happy should I be!

I left them and withdrew to the cave, which Raymundo called, with an arch smile, “the Cave of Declaration.” I had not been long there before I heard Raymundo’s whistle. Immediately I began singing “The Timid Lover,” as he had directed me, and went through all its stanzas doubtless with some effect; for it expressed what I really felt. As long as the song lasted, all was perfectly silent. Presently, however, cautious steps approached, and I heard Raymundo whisper—“He must be deeply in love.—There is our Medoro engraving the name of his Angelica. Let us see who she is.”

“Hush!” said a whispering voice, which I thought Isabella’s, “he may hear us.” They came nearer, my hand trembled, the pen-knife fell from it, I turned round, and lo! instead of Isabella’s, I met Marienne’s eyes. I started up, while Raymundo and my sister made the cave resound with peals of laughter. “Is this,”

cried I angrily, "the manner in which you play with my feelings? Do I treat *you* so?"

"Don't be angry," returned Raymundo, "this is only intended as the rehearsal; for I wished to ascertain first how far you were likely to succeed, and did not think you could do it so well. Now, however, that I am convinced you can perform your part with tolerable grace, I will go in quest of Isabella. So mind the whistle."

"You need not give yourself that trouble," said I with pique, "I can do without your assistance."

"'Tis but a little joke," said Marienne, "planned by us while you were engaged in that sublime conversation with Isabella, which made her yawn so repeatedly; and we intended it as a cure for your bashfulness, that you may not let such another opportunity as the last slip through your fingers. But," added she, "we are now ready really to give you our assistance."

If you'll begin the part of Medoro again, Raymundo shall go and look for Isabella."

"No," returned I coolly, "and I wish you would reserve your jokes for less serious occasions than this."

"Upon my honour," said Raymundo, "he is right. These are too serious matters to jest about, and I should have found it difficult to have kept my temper half so well as he has done."

"Nonsense," said Marienne to him: "it is good fun; but if both of you, with your extravagant notions of the romantic, will not allow me to jest upon love matters, why, adieu,—no more of my co-operation. You may remain together as long as you please in the Cave of Declaration as you call it, which, however, if you are so very timorous, you had better at once call 'the Cave of Disappointment.'"

Saying this, she went away laughing heartily.

"I confess this is a little too bad of me," said

Raymundo, “but you looked so unaccountably embarrassed, I could not resist the temptation of having a little fun with you ; but I really did not mean to annoy you ; and now, tell me, what can I do for you ?”

“Nothing,” replied I, “but hold your tongue ; for I should not so easily forgive your telling Isabella what a fool I have been.”

“Oh, you may depend upon my being silent, though I cannot be discreet,” replied he, laughing as he left me.

“What would Isabella think of such a ridiculous manoeuvre ?” said I aloud, as I turned round to look at the name I had been cutting in the side of the cave.

“That you were desperately in love,” said a voice behind me, “and I have been telling her so.”

I turned round and saw Marienne and Isabella herself. “She will not believe me,” added my sister ; “but perhaps you may convince her.

Do hear him, dear Isabella, I assure you he can talk sometimes, though perhaps you hardly believe it."

Saying this my mischievous sister ran away, leaving us both covered with confusion. How I recovered my voice, or what were the first incoherent words I stammered out, I have forgotten; but I shall never forget the sweet gentle tone of Isabella as she answered me: "I must always feel for you the warmest gratitude; for I can never forget that to you I and my dear uncle owe our lives."

"And may I hope for nothing more than gratitude? dearest Isabella—may not the tenderest, the sincerest love, hope for something more?"

She made no reply, but she did not withdraw the hand I had taken, while her lovely face and neck were covered with blushes. A look, one look of those soft dark eyes left me nothing to wish for,—the ecstasy of that moment was almost more than I could bear. I threw

myself at her feet, imprinted a thousand kisses on her hand, and was half delirious with joy.

As soon as we recovered a little composure, we rejoined the party, who were seated under the shadow of the trees that bordered the river. We sat down with the rest, and it was proposed and agreed, that each of the young people should contribute a song towards the general entertainment. When Isabella's turn came, she made no difficulty, though she blushed, and her voice at first was not so steady as usual. As she sang, I know not which of the two enjoyed most that intoxicating pleasure produced by music and poetry,—she in feeling and expressing the passion with images full of tenderness and beauty, assisted by all the enrapturing powers of melody, or I in catching those images, those sweet sounds, and, more than all, those magic looks which hovered about my very soul. Whoever has felt one of those passionate fits of admiration will understand whence arises the pride one feels at being the chosen object of the

woman who excites it. All is accounted for then. It is not a human creature who plays on our heart strings, it is a being superior to ourselves, who condescends to charm us. Such at least I thought her, and I listened to her accents with a breathless rapture. Her voice was to my charmed senses like the wild, soft, penetrating sound of the Eolian harp.

After singing, we danced, and afterwards the young men performed various games of strength, skill, and agility to amuse the company. How rapidly the moments flew! Time seemed to have unfurled all his sails, and the hour of our return came but too soon.

I fear the reader has taken but little interest in these impressions of my boyhood; but still I could not resist the temptation of recurring to them; for their remembrance, which alone makes us sensible of their having once existed, instead of being effaced from my mind, seems to receive from time, the inexorable destroyer of

all realities, a softer glow. At the period in question, elated by the new feelings which occupied my heart, the future seemed to dilate itself to my mental sight, and to present a new world filled with endless pleasures.

CHAPTER V.

All the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed :
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.

The Deserted Village.—GOLDSMITH.

OUR excursion to Isabella's Island was followed by another to a *Romeria* at a small village near Valladolid, called La Cesterniga, at which an immense number of the town's-people always assist.

I ought to observe here, that in most of the Spanish villages there is a miraculous image, generally of the Virgin Mary, whom the inhabitants consider their patroness in heaven. These

saints, which are of a very rude and ancient workmanship, have their temples, generally, at a little distance from the villages. At the time of the invasion of the Saracens, these images were hidden by the Christians in caverns, or buried in their fields to save them from profanation, and when, many years after the total expulsion of the Infidels, the husbandman in the course of his labour found any of them, they were regarded by the ignorant peasantry with the utmost veneration, as if they really were portions of the divinity. The priests, always ready to take advantage of human weakness, instead of undeceiving those poor and simple creatures, invented a thousand gross fables, which they sanctified as miracles; and on the spot where an image had been found, they persuaded, or obliged the land proprietors to raise a hermitage or a temple, often at great expense, many of which became afterwards asylums for banditti and monks. As these miraculous images were said to be in the habit of working many

more cures than those effected by the sons of Esculapius, the faithful thronged to them in great numbers; but of late, since the power of faith has decreased among the Spaniards, these images are somewhat sparing of their miracles, and the monks, dreading the end of this most valuable mine of wealth, have substituted for miracles, music, dancing, and bull-feasts, the substance of our Romerias, and have found it a very successful expedient.

That at which we assisted at the period in question was one of the best and most numerously attended. The day before the Romeria, there was an unusual bustle at Valladolid. Joy and expectation were discernible in every countenance. The tender maid, the young spouse, the pretty widow, and even the old maid, all sought in art new charms to add to those with which nature had endowed them; while the *currutaco*,* generally well satisfied with himself, the gallant sol-

* A Spanish dandy.

dier, and the gay student, did not disdain the duties of the toilet, the better to captivate the eyes of their respective belles;—in a word, all seemed anxious to appear on the scene adorned with their best looks and gayest attire.

Early on the day of the Romeria, the whole of our party set off from our house in town, variously mounted, and proceeded slowly through the road that was crowded with vehicles of every description; horses, mules, and donkeys being all adorned with little bells, which, mixing their silvery sound with the harmony of guitars, and the songs of the pilgrims, produced a very agreeable effect. In one place might be seen the tender swain, loaded with the provisions for the day, walking beside his mistress, who went along singing to him and striking her pandereta, or rattling her castanets. Further on was the solicitous lover, quite alarmed at the little accident which had happened to his dame, — *de faire la culbute*, — as the French would express it, and acting as a squire, to assist

her in remounting "*la maldita bestia*." But the happiest of them were those who carried their charmers on their horses, either before or behind them, their waists being girded by the fair arms of their beauties. This decent freedom enjoyed by our women, does not at all correspond with the romantic notions which I know some English ladies still entertain in regard to the massive bolts, impenetrable veils, and watchful duennas, which are placed as guards over Spanish beauty. But I can assure them that all these are gone by, to the great improvement both of social intercourse and the morals of the people: for nothing can more effectually secure the virtue of women, than the consciousness in men of having it entrusted to their honour.

At last, we reached the spot on which the festival was to be celebrated. It offered to the eye a scene of mirth and gaiety not easily to be

^a The villainous beast.

described. Within the hermitage, a troop of young peasants, clad in their holiday-clothes, without their jackets, and their shirt-sleeves tied with various coloured ribbons, were rattling their castanets, and capering before the altar, while several gigantic figures, male and female, most extravagantly dressed, were making wry faces, and frightening the children out of their wits. Now and then these Brobdignags also mixed in the dance, to the sound of the pipe and tabor. The procession then moved out of the hermitage, and, after going round and round it, re-entered the church, preceded by the holy banners unfurled, and the image of the miraculous virgin, which unfortunately had lost an eye, and which, in spite of the thorough washing it had undergone the day before, and of its beautiful petticoat of silver and gold tissue, still retained some of the swarthy hue that age, and the smoke of the lamp constantly burning before it, had thrown over its complexion.

A grand mass was then sung by the best

voices in the village, and with full organ ; after which a *Te Deum* was chanted, in which all the old women and boys of the district joined. This finished, the priest besprinkled the faithful with the holy water, made his collections, which, by the satisfaction with which he shook the tin box, must have been rather handsome, gave us his blessing, and the joyful throng retired to partake of a rural dinner.

All along the fertile plain, at the foot of the hermitage, groups of persons were seen lying on the ground, with their *fiambre*,^a and *botas*^b of wine before them, singing, laughing, and playing all kinds of tricks, all ranks, ages, and sexes huddled together, with a cordiality characteristic only of the Spanish nation. There might be seen, persons of the true blue-blood, slighting all etiquette, and offering part of their provisions to the plebeian, who, sensible of this honour, sat himself down to eat with them, and treated

^a Cold meat of various sorts differently dressed.

^b Skins in which the wine is carried.

them with a joke, or some witty story of his own invention ; while the handicraftsman politely offered his bota to the hidalgo, both rendering common what each had brought for his family and friends.

It is at these convivial parties that the Spaniards indulge in many pleasantries, and sprightly stories, which would, perhaps, alarm the severely orthodox imaginations of another country ; and that even before the vapours from the viands and the wines have set their brains fermenting. On such occasions, all the little passions and vanities which agitate society are forgotten, and every guest brings forth all his powers of pleasing. Their conversation then teems with pleasant sallies, witty repartees, bon-mots, and all the legitimate or illegitimate offspring of gaiety. The great readiness which the Spaniards possess for poetry, and their talent for improvisation, (which is quite equal to that of the Italians), is a source of much entertainment at these parties. It is really surprising

to hear some of these natural versifiers compose with the rapidity of thought, octavas and decimas,^a often all constructed on the same rhyme; and keep up poetical disputes, which might puzzle the most fertile and ingenious. One of the company cries out "*bola*," to call the attention, and, as soon as silence is obtained, the speaker pours forth his decima, the subject of which is either a compliment to one of the ladies present, an epigram on one of the company, or some burlesque allusions to some amusing incident that may have occurred during the day. The humour displayed in these stanzas, and the emphatical manner of their delivery, move the gravest faces; and if good sense is sometimes sacrificed, the rules of versification are always rigorously observed.

After dinner, on the above occasion, every one hastened to the *corral de bueyes*, or inclosure where the bull-baiting was to be performed.

^a Stanzas of eight and ten verses.

Here we got a comfortable seat on the top of the mud-walls which form its enclosure, and waited full an hour, every moment expecting to be pushed down by the crowd, who eagerly pressed forward to the sight. At last, the *aficionados*^a were seen, some galloping down to the *corral*, and others driving the bulls towards it by means of the *cabestros*.^b As soon as the distant sound of the bells became more audible, all was confusion and uproar. Some of the people climbed up the trees ; others thronged to some carts which were in the middle of the *corral*, armed with their long cudgels to keep off the bulls ; while others, more confident in their own courage and resources, kept the field of honour, where some were soon rolled in the dust.

The horsemen now arrived at full gallop, to

^a Amateurs.

^b Tame bullocks which have a large bell with a wooden clapper tied round their necks, the sound of which attracts the fiercer bulls after them.

clear the area, though that was an unnecessary trouble, for no sooner did one bull enter, than only the clusters of men on the carts were to be seen in it, the braggadocios having skulked underneath them. The cries of the multitude, the shrill whistlings of those who were safer than the rest, and the confused and rapid motion of those who were rushing forward to throw their cloaks to the bulls, were enough to bewilder the best organized head in Spain; while the bull, finding himself called on every side, hardly knew which way to turn, and paused for a long time, as if he himself were stunned by these different cries. No sooner did he rush towards one group, than he was called by another. Constantly distracted by the numbers that ran after him, on whatever side he charged, those whom he pursued were almost sure to elude his horns; so that, as a fellow who had pushed himself near me observed, "there was scarcely any fun." Anton, however, who was from Andalusia, where they excel in these sports, and had from

childhood been accustomed to the dangers of them, was one of the aficionados, and shewed considerable skill on this occasion. While the rest were tumbling about, and were even sometimes tossed up to a good height, he was always on his legs, attracting the beast with his light cloak. After thus tiring two or three bulls, till they would fight no longer, the feast terminated, and the *corral* was given up to the boys, to amuse themselves with a young bull provided for the purpose.

The whole being concluded, several dancing parties were formed on the green, and on the village square, in which the better sort of people participated. The greatest order and harmony prevailed till the evening, when most of the people repaired to their homes, and our party returned to Cigales.

The remainder of the Vendimias flew rapidly away in the society of Isabella, which I enjoyed with hardly any interruption. Every day discovered to me some new charm, some amiable

trait. Her beauty, grace, and lively sensibility, appeared to me more attractive than any thing I had ever seen ; but it was necessary to know her some time to appreciate her fully. At first she was loved and admired for her personal attractions and amiable disposition ; but, by degrees, it was discovered that she possessed elegant accomplishments, a well-informed mind, and all that playful wit which is so enchanting when regulated (as it was in her) by sound sense, and kindly feeling. She was candour itself, and her expressions were always so natural and unaffected, that they instantly found their way to the heart. Every thing she said, every thing she did, charmed by its simplicity. The sweetness of her temper was such, that even those young females who were reputed to be envious and malignant, loved her, and spoke of her with praise and admiration, notwithstanding the general homage that was paid to her personal charms.

Such was the object of my affection. What

delightful moments were those passed by her side! It is true she had not openly avowed her sentiments towards me, but was the language of her eyes the less eloquent and convincing? Did I not conceive by her look, that she felt pleasure in seeing me, and pain at parting, even for a few hours? To doubt of her love would have been folly; and to be loved by such a being!—how could I be sufficiently grateful for such happiness?

This delightful season being now nearly at an end, it was finally resolved we should all return to town in about three days time. The afternoon previous to the day of our departure, while I was preparing to accompany my young friends and Isabella to the wood on a shooting-party, my father stopped me, saying, that he wished me to remain with him. I submitted with as good a grace as I could, but not without some chagrin; for I had promised myself much pleasure in conducting Isabella to some of our favourite spots. As soon as we were alone,

“Esteban,” said my father, in a kind but grave tone, “I have put your obedience to the test, and given you some little disappointment: but I have done so, my child, to save you from a much heavier one hereafter. You think our fair guest charming? I have seen this for some time,” continued he, smiling at my confusion; “but I was unwilling to damp the pleasures of the present happy season by any thing that might give you pain. Now, however, that it is at an end, I must warn you to beware how you think of Isabella. If you encourage the feeling which, I perceive, you at present entertain towards her, it will end only in disappointment, for she can never be yours.”

“Never!” exclaimed I, “oh! why not? It is true we are not titled; but we are nobles; and besides the Marquis is free from the prejudices of birth. If I show myself worthy of his niece, and can gain her love, surely he will not refuse her to me, the son of a friend to whom he owes so much.”

“It is possible he would not,” replied my father; “but, my dear Esteban, do not deceive yourself with such false hopes; there are other reasons which you will one day know. In the mean time, believe me, though I cannot now explain them, they render an union between you and Isabella utterly impossible.”

At this time my father was called out of the room, and he left me thunderstruck. For some minutes I remained motionless, but the words “she can never be yours,” resounded in my ears. I rushed out of the house, towards the little wood, not far distant, and throwing myself on the ground relieved my heart by a torrent of tears. While giving way to all the agony of this first burst of feeling, I felt some one gently endeavouring to raise my head from my clasped hands. It was Isabella herself, pale with terror at seeing me in such a state.—“Esteban!” said she, with a faltering voice, “what has happened?”

I could neither answer her, nor check my

tears.—“Tell me, I entreat you, what is it that affects you thus? Are you ill?”

“Yes!” exclaimed I, at last, “so ill that my heart aches till I can bear it no longer. Oh, Isabella! I must love you no more!—Can you indeed never be mine?”

“What do you mean, Esteban? Tell me, I entreat you, what has happened. Is it kind,” added she, gently reproaching me, “to have this reserve with me?”

“Reserve with you, my Isabella, when every feeling of my heart is yours!—Do not think it is that.—But you shall know all.—My father has observed my attachment for you, and warns me against encouraging it. He says, it can end only in disappointment.”

“Why?” replied Isabella. “He does not know my uncle, who has often assured me he would unite me only where I could be happy. Why should he refuse his consent to the son of his friend, if he can prove himself worthy of his esteem?”

“It is not that, dearest Isabella; there is some other reason which my father will not disclose; but which he tells me I shall one day know. Meanwhile, however, you will leave us; you will visit other scenes; some one more worthy of you than I am will be presented to you, and I shall be forgotten!”

“Never! never!” cried she, clasping my hands in hers, “I can never forget you. Our union may be delayed, but be assured that nothing can change my affection.”

“Dearest Isabella,” cried I, throwing myself at her feet, “you restore me to life. I will hope that this obstacle is not so insurmountable as my father imagines.”

“It can never,” continued she, “be the trifling difference of rank. At all events, be assured that my uncle will not think that an obstacle.”

“I will hope so.—Oh, how can I despair, when my sweet Isabella bids me hope?”

After new protestations of an everlasting affection, we returned home, my heart lightened of the burden under which I must have sunk, had not heaven sent my guardian angel to relieve me from a part of it.

CHAPTER VI.

'Tis a wild tale—and sad too, as the sigh
That young lips breathe when love's first breathings fly;
When blights, and canker worms, and chilling showers,
Come withering o'er the warm heart's passion flowers.

IMPROVISATRICE, L. E. L.

THE varied pleasures of the Vendimias being now over, to the great regret of the whole party, who had spent two happy months in the bosom of a delightful country, we returned to Valladolid, and I resumed my University studies; this being my second year of attendance.

Isabella, too, accustomed to occupy her time in something better than remembering the last amusement, and planning new ones, joined me in my studies, and we passed whole evenings together in perusing and feeling the beauties of our classic poets and prose authors, besides those

of France, and even some of the English, in whose language I began to make some progress, assisted by the collegians of the Scotch and English Colleges of Valladolid, and by Raymundo, who had made himself master of it while remaining at one of them.

This pleasure, however, was too pure and unalloyed to continue long uninterrupted. The Marquis received from his brother, Don Facundo, the following letter, which decided his departure:—

“MY BELOVED BROTHER,

“The apparently criminal conduct, (which, however, I was compelled to adopt) would sufficiently justify you in withholding from me that confidence and fraternal affection which I have never ceased to entertain for *you*. Acting under the influence of personages of the highest importance in the state, who thought the honor of our family compromised, and who urged the necessity of never giving up my claims until

they were clearly and forcibly proved to be illegal in the tribunals of the realm, as my resignation of them might have endangered the peace and interests of the State,—in a word, such being the wish of their most gracious Majesties, and of his Serene Highness the Prince of Peace,—it was impossible for me to oppose their desire.

“ Yet, notwithstanding the danger to which I was exposing myself, I represented to their Majesties, even before the question could be legally decided, the compulsion under which I was acting, and remonstrated in the most bold and energetic terms, declaring I should be compelled to resign my post of Camarista of Castile, if their Majesties insisted on not allowing me to give up the title and estates into your hands; for my conscience would not allow me to see a brother I so much loved suffering unmerited distress, which I felt still more keenly than he. Their Majesties, however, were offended at my freedom of expression, and Don Manuel actually

whispered something of the danger of terminating my days in a prison, if I did not let the balance of justice decide the question.

“ Seeing it was not possible for me to obtain what my heart so anxiously desired, I then intimated a wish to entertain you in private in my mansion till the decision of the cause; but I was deprived even of this pleasure, because, they said, it was indecorous in me to be at once prosecuting a person before the tribunals as an impostor, and giving him an asylum in my own house. Alas! my dear brother, how much my heart suffered from all these compulsions! How sincerely I detested the hour in which I set my foot in this court! To be thus the slaves of others, even when we are conscious of acting wrong! A dungeon at that moment would have been preferable to all the favours of monarchs; but, alas! our country required my services, and I could not have even the satisfaction of dying a victim to my principles and fraternal love! I was obliged to sacrifice the

dearest feelings of my heart to that country, which to-morrow or any other day may perhaps repay my services with ingratitude ! Such is, my beloved Marquis, the wretched lot of man in this valley of tears !

“ You can form no idea of the persecutions to which I was exposed for your sake ; and yet those who know not the secret springs which are touched upon in a court think me a villain ! Nay, Don Ignacio himself called me in public an unnatural brother, and a monster ! To such misrepresentations, however, are honorable men exposed, when Providence places them in situations like mine ! Yet, may heaven bless that upright man for the services he has done me ! Assure him, that far from being offended at what he said, the gratitude I feel for him shall be eternal. Tell him in my name that he has restored peace to an alarmed conscience ; that I should not have enjoyed a moment's happiness, had I, in spite of my ardent wishes, gained a lawsuit, which, by depriving

you of your rights and patrimony, could only have increased the misery of my already too afflicted mind.

“ As for yourself, my dear Lorenzo, I trust you will do my sentiments that justice to which they are entitled, after an explanation which would not have been prudent in me to have risked before this time, as, if intercepted, it might have occasioned both your ruin and my own. Now, however, that I see a great political change on the point of taking place, I will hazard it, because our misfortunes could be only of a short duration, and because I can no longer bear the idea of being considered by you as your worst enemy, when I have almost made the sacrifice of my life, to secure to you your just rights.

“ That you may be the better able to judge of my innocence, I invite you to come to me without delay, and I will then show you proofs so convincing, that they will completely remove

any doubt you may still harbour of my sincerity.

“ Ever your most attached and loving brother,

“ FACUNDO.”

The Marquis, who was of a most frank and unsuspecting character, and who never believed his brother wilfully criminal in the measures of severity he had adopted against him, was overjoyed at receiving such a letter. He immediately imparted its contents to my father, who admitted that Don Facundo might possibly be innocent, as men in such exalted situations are frequently obliged to consult the feelings of others rather than their own. Still, however, if he actually was innocent, my father could never consent to acquit him of the charge of weakness and servility. He was of opinion that Facundo should have risked all, as became an honorable man. No human consideration, not even that

of saving himself from a dungeon, ought to have made him commit such a flagrant breach of natural justice, and of all the ties of blood. Don Ignacio added, that if he had been in the place of Facundo, he would have acted differently.

Don Lorenzo endeavoured to exculpate his brother. “Besides,” said he, “was it likely that he who all his life had shown himself a kind affectionate brother, and a man of principle and virtue, should so easily have abandoned the path of honour?”

“My dear Marquis,” said my father, “the bad example of those who are above us is so pernicious, that it will contaminate the most virtuous. No court could boast of more decency of behaviour or virtuous habits than that of Charles III.; none can offer such melancholy instances of depravity and corruption as that of Maria Louisa and Godoy. Yet the greatest part of those who composed the court of the

former are the same men who now crouch in that of the latter. We must not, therefore, be too sure in those conclusions which are drawn from abstract principles. Let us hope that Don Facundo is sincere, a point which I think well worthy ascertaining, but first let me entreat your residence with us for one or two months longer."

"No, my dear friend," replied the Marquis, "my heart is anxious to ascertain a fact on which much of my happiness depends. After so many years of suffering, I would fain meet with a brother who still loves me, and who might afford me some consolation for the loss of all that was dear to my heart."

As soon as we learned this determination, every member of the family entreated him to defer his departure ; and I in particular could not help accompanying my entreaties with a flood of tears. But he was not to be prevailed upon ; and the unhappy period of our separa-

tion at length arrived : not however without the consoling hope that we should speedily meet again.

How shall I express the grief, the despair, which I felt at parting from Isabella ? Those who have loved, and been obliged to tear themselves from the object of their affection, know but too well what that separation is ; and those who have never loved at all, if any such there be, would perhaps not understand the feeling in question. I shall not therefore describe how we bade each other adieu ; all I shall say is that on that melancholy day, the whole family shared my feeling, as if each had lost a lover, or a bosom friend.

There is in the first separation from the person we love a sentiment so deeply distressing, that it can be compared only to that felt at the death of the dearest relative. Nothing, indeed, gives a more faithful image of death than absence. That grief which is felt at those irrecoverable losses in which death shuts out all

hope from our bosoms, is, perhaps, not more painful than the void which we experience in the absence of those we love, and which nothing can fill. Hope alone appears in the distance, glimmering like a solitary star in a tempestuous night ; but so involved in the depths of sorrow that it is seen only at intervals, increasing instead of diminishing our fears and doubts.

Bitter as was my anguish on the above named occasion, it was increased by a fatal secret which was communicated to me by my parents on the evening of Isabella's departure. A message from my father caused me to repair to his study ; where, on entering, I found my mother seated by him ; I remarked in their countenances a look indicating sorrow and uneasiness. For a little while we all three observed a profound silence, but my mother had clasped my hand in hers, and now and then pressed it with an expression in which I could not discern whether tenderness or compassion predominated.

“ Esteban,” said at last my father, taking

my other hand, “perhaps, my child, you may have guessed my object in desiring you to come here. I have before now warned you of your passion for Isabella. Imagining, however, it was only one of your youthful attachments, I did not repeat my warnings to you, in the hope that it would not be lasting; but now I see that I am mistaken. The effects of this separation prove to me, that there must be in your passion an intensity above your age. Such an attachment, however, must not exist. I say this only for the sake of your happiness. The secret I am about to disclose to you will explain all; and painful as it may be, both to you and to ourselves, it must no longer be delayed.— Know then, my child, that we are not your parents . . .”

“Heaven!” exclaimed I, interrupting him “what do I hear? Am I not your son? Who, then, are my parents?”

“My dear Esteban,” cried Doña Teresa embracing me, “be not afflicted, you shall always

be our child, as you have been till this moment, and whatever may happen to you, you shall never be abandoned by us."

I kissed her hand, bathing it with my tears. — "But who are my parents?" exclaimed I again, my utterance choked with sobs.

"That," said Don Ignacio, "is what I have not been able to ascertain, notwithstanding all my diligent inquiries. From a *relicario*^a found upon you, when you came into our hands, I am quite convinced that they were people of distinction; but by what crime or misfortune they were induced to cast you from them, I know not. — I will relate to you all I know about you.

"In the month of October, 1793, the river Pisuerga^b overflowed to such a degree, that its

^a A little gold or silver locket, containing some relic or consecrated image of the Virgin or of a Saint, which children frequently wear about them.

^b On the banks of this river, stands the city of Valladolid.

waters rose more than a hundred feet above the level of their bed, and entered the wine cellars, and ground floors even of those houses that were most distant from the river. This unexpected event obliged many of the inhabitants to fly from the town, and others to confine themselves to the upper part of their houses, where they were kept close prisoners for nearly a fortnight, compelled to live upon the scanty provisions furnished by the few boatmen engaged for that service. In consequence of this occurrence, I was obliged to retire, with my wife and children, to our country seat situate on the banks of the Duero, as soon as the inundation began; our house being one of the most exposed, on account of its contiguity to the river.

“One day I sent home an old servant of ours to procure some things, of which we were in want. On his return he brought back with him an infant not quite two years old—yourself, whom he said he had found in one of the

rooms in a little cradle which I still keep, and which to all appearance had been left there by the waters of the river that had entered by the window. You were nearly starved with hunger and cold. A relicario hung from your neck, in which we found a slip of paper very unintelligibly written, but which I made out as follows :—‘ I consign this child of noble parents to the waters, because I am not born a murderer. If the will of Providence be that its life be saved, he will show it by preserving it. Its real name I am not at liberty to disclose ; but I call him Esteban. May heaven pardon me !’

“ ‘ Year of his birth, 1791.’

“ We lost no time in making every sort of enquiry that might lead to the discovery of your parents, but all our steps were fruitless. We could not succeed in tracing any thing even of your foster-parents. We resolved, therefore, to adopt you, and bring you up with the rest of our children. One of about your own age dying about that time, Providence seemed to

have sent you to us on purpose to supply its place. The circumstance of our finding you was soon forgotten by the generality of those who knew us, or at all events no longer spoken of, and we have been particularly careful that none of our children should ever be informed of the fact. To this I will now add, that until your real parents are found, we shall continue to keep it a secret, and consider you, as we have hitherto done, in the light of one of our own children."

I bent my knee to kiss Don Ignacio's hand, my heart divided between sorrow and gratitude. —"Then," said I, drowned in tears, "I am a foundling!—Nay, the parents who gave me being have cast me out to perish, as if I were a monster, who would one day tear them in pieces! —Alas!—no parents to love me!"

"My child!" exclaimed Doña Teresa, clasping me in her arms, and wetting my cheeks with tears, "do not thus tear my heart. Have I not always been to thee as a tender mother?"

Has not Don Ignacio been an affectionate father?—Why then say, thou hast no parents to love thee?”

“Pardon, my beloved mother,—for I must always call you so,—I did not allude to you when I reflected on my birth. Heaven has taken me from those who gave me life, because they were unnatural and wished my death, to place me in the hands of those who have not only preserved my life, but reared me up in the paths of virtue and honor. Thus I owe more to you than to them, and my gratitude to such parents shall be eternal.”

Upon this they both embraced me, and endeavoured by every consolatory expression to allay the deep sorrow that rent my heart; but grief had invaded all, I was equally insensible to their tender caresses, and their tears. This accumulation of evils threw me into a fever which kept me for some time in a state of the greatest danger; during which a thousand frightful visions tormented my imagination.

The great care, however, of Doña Teresa, and Don Ignacio's kindness, (who even promised his assistance towards procuring for me the hand of Isabella, when by my good conduct I should have merited it,) restored me gradually to health and to something like serenity. My spirits, however, were still much depressed, and I had recourse to my books. I read over and over those passages which had most delighted Isabella, and found in this occupation some alleviation to my grief. Often the illusion of my mind was so great, that I fancied her by my side, her eyes fixed on mine, and by turns languid and animated, expressing, like a faithful mirror, every feeling of her soul. But soon the idea that such happiness might never again be mine, chased away the pleasing vision, and overwhelmed me with a thousand fears. Would Isabella still continue faithful when she became acquainted with my singular story? And if her affection were so generous and sincere,

could I hope that the Marquis would listen to the pretensions of a poor foundling ? I dreaded, yet longed for her return, to relieve this agonizing suspense ; for I did not dare to make a communication of such importance by letter.

CHAPTER VII.

That such a slave as this should wear a sword,
Who wears no honesty! Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, who bite the holy cords in twain,
Which are too intrinse t'unloose, smooth every passion,
That in the nature of their lords rebels;
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Reneg, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks
With every gale, and vary of their masters;
As knowing nought, like dogs, but following.

SHAKSPEARE.

It was in the beginning of March, of the year 1808, that the Marquis and Isabella reached Madrid. As this is one of the most important epochs in the modern history of Spain, and as the subsequent events of my life are so much interwoven with it, I may be permitted to glance rapidly over the political aspect of Spain at that period, in order that the reader may be better able to follow the thread of my narrative.

In 1795, Spain signed the peace of Basle with France, ceding to her all her share of Hispaniola, one of the most ancient and productive possessions in the New World. Don Manuel Godoy, the minister of Charles IV. was the author of that shameful treaty, in consequence of which he assumed the title of Prince of Peace. On the following year he concluded one still more disadvantageous, that of St. Ildefonso, by which the two nations agreed, in case of war, to aid each other mutually with men and money. Threatened as France was at that time, by a coalition, which Spain might either have joined or remained neutral, the advantages of such a treaty, were so evidently on the side of the former, that there can be no doubt of the motives which influenced Godoy ; who in this instance, as in many others, showed himself ready to sacrifice the interests of his country to his own private ambition.

In virtue of this treaty, Napoleon drew immense sums of money from Spain, and drove her

into a war with Great Britain, the more effectually to exhaust her little remaining resources. He then sent one of her armies to the north of Europe, another to Portugal, and a third to Italy, thus draining the country of all the troops that might otherwise have opposed his ultimate designs. By the defeat of our fleet at Trafalgar, where, to say the least, the French behaved in a very equivocal manner, the remains of our marine were completely sacrificed, and no naval force left to check by sea his future views over the Peninsula.

Our government, harassed with these continual sacrifices, resolved, towards the end of 1806, when Napoleon was about to attack Prussia, to shake off the yoke of France; but Godoy, unacquainted with a single principle of politics, and incapable of even pursuing with firmness the plans he formed, contented himself with causing a ridiculous declaration to be circulated throughout Spain, in which hints were thrown out of

some great armament that was preparing, and of the strength and resources she still possessed.

The whole of this mystery was well understood by Napoleon; but as he was not at that time in a state to resent it as he wished, he contented himself with making a strong representation to the Spanish government, who on hearing of the victory of Jena, gave up the design, having not had sufficient boldness to declare war against him when they had it in their power to divide his forces. Napoleon, however, never forgot the affront, and he vowed that Charles should be the last of the Bourbons in Spain. Moreover, when he broke open the *escrutoires* of the King of Prussia, he found in one of them a letter from Charles IV. advising him to go to war with France, and promising to make a diversion by attacking her from the Pyrenees. This discovery irritated Napoleon still more, but the time to avenge it was not yet come; he, therefore, made the celebrated treaty at Fontainebleau,

in 1807, by which he completely deceived the Prince of Peace.

In this treaty Napoleon guaranteed to Charles and his descendants the integrity of his dominions, and ceded to him the kingdom of Portugal, dividing it into three parts, and introducing a French army into Portugal to further his views upon Spain. Of those three parts, he gave one to the Queen of Etruria and her son, in exchange for her dominions in Italy; another was to be given in complete sovereignty to the Prince of Peace, with the title of Prince of Algarve; and a third was to remain sequestered, to be given to the House of Braganza, as a bait to the English to secure the restitution of Gibraltar and Trinidad to the Spaniards.

Such was the grand scheme of policy with which Napoleon thought to conceal his views, and advance his great end. Freed from the affairs of the north, he undertook the expedition to Spain, under the pretext of invading Africa, shutting the English out of the ports of Barbary,

and garrisoning all the south of the Peninsula. Without any official notice, an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men was sent into Spain, besides the forty thousand that were already in Portugal, under the command of Junot. No conqueror ever attacked a country with greater resources, with such deep-laid schemes, and above all, with such consummate perfidy. The generals and marshals of the greatest military skill were invested with the command of his armies. Our government were so unprovided, and so weak, that they dared not enquire into the real object of the march of these armies, nor treat officially on an affair of such serious importance.

While the troops of Napoleon were marching into Spain, he was endeavouring to further the success of his scheme, by representing the reigning monarch in the most contemptible light to the nation ; and unfortunately there was ample ground for censure. In the twenty years during which Charles IV. had reigned, not one single act

of virtue or justice had distinguished his government, and scarcely a single measure had passed that was not dictated by gross ignorance, or arbitrary authority. Governed by a woman, the most wicked and corrupt, and by a minister, avaricious, despotic, and equally destitute of talent and principle, his unfortunate reign was a series of evils and disasters for unhappy Spain. The great mass of the nation despised a prince so weak and despicable; and ardently desired the punishment of a minister, under whose administration the laws were evaded with impunity, and the nation, notwithstanding its immense resources, brought to the verge of ruin.

Spain had lost almost its whole navy, which, on the accession of Charles, was the largest and best equipped it had ever possessed. The army was so diminished, that all its fortresses were dismantled. The treasury of the nation was entirely exhausted, and the public credit completely annihilated. Interest, and not merit, was the sole title for preferment. The will of the

minister and his creatures was law, and the morals of the higher classes was corrupted to an unparalleled degree.

Such was the deplorable state of things in Spain at the moment of its occupation by French troops. Great errors, indeed, must have been committed by Napoleon or his emissaries, when he so completely failed in his scheme of changing a dynasty that was hated almost by every Spaniard. His intrigues, by which Charles's paternal affection for his son Ferdinand was alienated ; the imprisonment of this prince ; the decree of the 30th of October, in which he was, in the face of the whole world, declared a homicide, before a single proof of his guilt was produced ; in fine, all the persecutions he underwent, instead of bringing things to that issue which Napoleon had anticipated, only excited the sympathy of the Spaniards in favour of a prince so unjustly treated, and raised a party for him, which otherwise would never have existed, and which, in the end, led to the annihilation of Napoleon's power.

While the Emperor was secretly urging these proceedings against Ferdinand, his ambassador at Madrid was publicly taking his part, and causing him to be immediately set at liberty, as well as the principal people concerned in his cause. Godoy, the king, and queen, began to be alarmed at these measures; and, in order to conciliate Napoleon, without whose support they were ruined, wrote to him, proposing an alliance between a cousin of the Empress's and Ferdinand; but his object being to frighten them to America, that he might have a plausible pretext for taking possession of Spain, he wrote back in a style likely to increase their alarms, whilst their replies met with a contemptuous silence. Don Eugenio Izquierdo, confidant of Godoy, was therefore sent to Paris, for the purpose of negotiating the marriage, to which, after some difficulties, Napoleon at last agreed.

In the mean time he used all possible pains to make it appear, that he took the side of the prince, in order that his troops might thus find

an admission into Spain without any resistance ; and, in a few weeks after, they took possession of Pampeluna, Figueras, and Barcelona. Godoy began now to mistrust the Emperor, and the return of Izquierdo completely dispelled his few remaining hopes.

His sole object now was to remove himself and the court to Mexico ; and as the French troops approached Madrid, he began to take his measures for the intended departure. He went to Aranjuez, where the royal pair then resided, and issued orders to different generals to secure the king's departure. The friends of Ferdinand attempted to oppose this measure ; but Godoy, who saw no other means of saving his life than by flight, resolved to undertake the voyage with the king, queen, and royal family. This led to the disturbances of Aranjuez, to the disgrace and imprisonment of Godoy, and to the abdication of Charles in favour of his son Ferdinand, Prince of Asturias.

These last important events happened a few

days after the Marquis's arrival at Madrid. Isabella had already, according to her promise at parting, sent me several letters full of tenderness and simplicity; but as they would, perhaps, give no one else so much pleasure as they did me, I shall extract from them, and from those of the Marquis to Don Ignacio, only such parts as I think will be interesting to the general reader.

Madrid, April 8th, 1808.

“MY BELOVED ESTEBAN,

“We are at last safely arrived at the end of our journey, and what is better still, we shall not remain here long. I tell you this good news first, because I think it will give you more pleasure than any thing else, and after tiring you perhaps with my regrets and lamentations, I am glad to write of something more cheerful. I will now therefore speak only of hope, and of what I have seen since I came to this celebrated city, which I believe is as new to you as it was to me.

“ When I last wrote to you, we were about to pass Somosierra. Would you believe that the sublime scenery of those mountains, in which the pencil of nature seems to have exhausted all its varieties, far from soothing my feelings, seemed to increase their bitterness ? The deep and solemn silence of those solitudes, their grandeur and sublimity, had indeed something wild and melancholy that accorded with the actual state of my mind ; but though my eyes roved in admiration over them, when I turned to notice their peculiar beauties,—you were not there ! But pardon, I promised to amuse you,—I am afraid this is not keeping to my word.

“ After encountering a thousand difficulties in traversing the elevated mountains of Somosierra, we visited the *lavaderos*^a belonging to my uncle. Here we saw the wool of his merinos collected in a prodigious quantity ; but which he has little hopes of being able to dispose of with any advantage to himself in the present distressed

^a Places where the wool of the merinos is washed.

state of commerce. Having succeeded in getting back to the new road that leads from Burgos to the capital without any serious accident, we there abandoned the wretched mode of travelling we had been compelled to adopt, the backs of mules, for the more commodious one of our carriage.

“ On the following day we approached the capital of the Spains, along the bushy banks of the Manzanares. Situate on a high plain which commences at the foot of Somosierra, Madrid displays itself most majestically in the form of an amphitheatre. From the top of this mountain we could see monumental gates, steeples without number, the sumptuous palace of our sovereigns, and others almost as magnificent belonging to the grandees. On descending, the avenues of the Florida hid from our view the sterile and uncultivated soil that covers the declivities of the hills almost from the city ramparts to the end of the basin, through which the Manzanares silently flows.

“Soon after, we traversed the first of the two bridges, under which its almost invisible waters pass. I could not help regretting aloud, that there was not a finer river to correspond with such a handsome bridge. ‘Señorita,’ said our zagal, the humorous Anton, who overheard me, ‘you may take my word for it, all is topsy-turvy in this accursed city. There are bridges without rivers, and parks without trees; the butter is sold by the yard, and the wood by the pound; the wine by the lump, and the cabbages by the measure; there are bronze statues in the kitchen-gardens, and in some public places none at all; people bathe themselves in the sand, and, as the proverb says, ‘there are winds that will not extinguish a candle, but that will kill a man.’”

“Having passed the second bridge, we entered the city by the gate of Segovia. The confused noise of the droves of oxen, sheep, and donkeys, crossing each other in every direction; the cries of the *aguadores*,^a carrying on their

^a Watermen.

backs the heavy tun ; the harsh sound of the bells tied to the long files of mules that were bringing to the capital the riches of the provinces ; the piercing noise of the little bells of *coches de colleras, calesines*,^a and other vehicles, flying along the pavement, through every street and lane ; the songs of the blind men twanging their guitars ; together with the shrill voices of the women vociferating every article of consumption ; the quarrels of the *Manolos*,^b with their elegant costumes ; all those different cries resounded in my ears till my head became quite confused and insensible to any of them.

“ Immediately after our arrival at the Fonda del Angel, in the Plazuela del Angel, several of my uncle’s friends hastened to visit and offer us their houses, which they knew very well we

^a A sort of cabriolet.

^b A class of men peculiar to Madrid, belonging to the lower rank, from which the circuses get their bull-fighters, the ladies of the high circles their beaux, and those of the lower their bullies.

should not accept. There were many vows exchanged, many high-flown compliments, great professions of eternal friendship, and, I presume, very little sincerity. I could not help remarking to my uncle the frivolity that was manifested by almost all, both in their words and movements. His answer (which I copy here, that your apprehensions of his ever wishing to seek their alliance, may be dispelled) was this.

“ ‘ We cannot wonder at it, my dear Isabella, when we see that all our grandees, sunk to the level of their servile prerogatives, know nothing but how to assist at the rising and going to bed of their master, degrading the name of their ancestors by the exercise of functions which subject, not the feudatory lord to the sovereign, but one man to another man. What exalted ideas can he have, who quits the anti-chamber at midnight, only to return next day before day-light, to wait on his master again? The palace was assigned to them by Philip II. as a place of

exile. He called them to the capital and prohibited their residence on their estates as the most effectual way of rendering them less formidable. At that time they were to be feared; they formed a barrier against the encroachments of the crown, and the people often looked up to them as their protectors, and the defenders of the ancient constitution of our land. But soon, the fascination of despotism, like that of the rattlesnake, deprived them of the power of acting; they began to interpret its words literally, and afterwards consented to their own degradation by accepting the places of servitude. Excluded from the high posts of the state, to possess only those of the Court, the most illustrious names by degrees disappeared from the political scene, and their progeny became mere postillions to carry a complimentary letter from their master to other monarchs! All that our unhappy country receives now from them is meanness and injury. Their immense estates absorb all the fruits of our soil, which, however, remains in

such a state of uncultivation, as to make a comparative desert of our once fertile and populous country. They even become useless to that sovereign authority to which they have sacrificed their honor and independence ; for, by ceasing to be a dyke against its encroachments, they have also lost the power of serving it as a support, and, in case of need, as a bulwark. But, added he, ‘ all those insolent automata, or illustrious lacqueys, who, instead of talents and virtues, have to boast of nothing but debts, deformities, and ancestry, will, in the great changes that are preparing, no longer deck, like statues or tapestry figures, the saloons of the palace with their pompous embroidery. They will be crushed under the weight of public indignation ; whereas, if they had dignity and energy of character, instead of ignorance and pride, they might still be the first to secure the blessings of a rational government to their country, and the gratitude of their fellow-citizens.

“ I think a man who expresses himself in these

terms, my dear Esteban, certainly will not compel his niece to marry one of those he so deeply despises. Your fears in this respect are therefore perfectly unfounded; and as for their personal attractions, I am in no danger of being caught by *them*, for I can assure you I never beheld a set of men more entirely unattractive and insignificant. One would think their Majesties had taken pains to collect the most despicable specimens that could be found in the kingdom, of both personal and mental qualities.

“ But I must now introduce to you a personage who must not remain unnoticed; he figures too much at court, and is too closely united with us, for me to neglect giving you a description of him.—Of course, you guess it is of Don Facundo I am about to speak.

“ The day of our arrival he sent a lacquey to inform us, that he regretted exceedingly he could not call upon us that very day, as he was of *semana* or on service; but that he hoped to see us on the next day, immediately after he had

transacted business with their Majesties. In fact, next morning about ten ‘his Excellency Don Facundo Torrealva’ was vociferated by the servants he had sent beforehand to the Fonda to announce him, and presently we saw a tall thin man enter, dressed in a magnificent uniform of Camarista, trimmed all over with gold lace, and decorated with several ribbons and orders. As soon as he perceived Don Lorenzo, he threw open his arms, and hastened to embrace him.

“ ‘At last,’ said he, with tears in his eyes, ‘I have the felicity to close in these arms, that beloved brother, whose death I have so often wept, and whose late misfortunes I have so much lamented ! Are you indeed my dear Don Lorenzo ? Oh ! happy day, which I had despaired ever again to see !—And this young lady—who is she ?’ ” added he, turning to me with a look of surprise.

“ ‘ ’Tis our niece Isabella,’ said my uncle.

“ ‘ Ah, indeed !’ exclaimed he. ‘ I am delighted to see her. The queen, too, will be

glad to know her; but I cannot yet present her at court, for their Majesties are leaving Madrid for Aranjuez in a day or two. I must go there too.—But between ourselves,' said he in a whisper to Don Lorenzo, 'I see that the day of their power is past, and I am not sorry for it. He is but a weak imbecile, and she a worthless corrupt woman, whom we ought all to detest. As for that iniquitous man, that monster whom heaven in his anger has cast into our unhappy land to devour it, he ought not to breathe one day longer. But all is over with him: a few days more and all will be right.—Adieu,' said he, throwing his arms again round my uncle's neck, 'for I have most important affairs to transact. To-morrow I'll see you again.'—Saying this he walked off, frequently turning to bow to us, amidst the vociferations of his servants for, 'his Excellency Don Facundo Torrealva's carriage.'

“When he had left us, I observed in my uncle's countenance a strong expression of disappointment.—‘Don Ignacio,’ said he, ‘was

right. I can no longer think Facundo sincere. Real joy does not express itself in that manner. Then that ingratitude towards the man who has raised him to the post he enjoys, and given him all the wealth and honors he possesses!—I am grieved to see it; but we must soon quit this place; for now I am convinced of his insincerity, I cannot bear to stay here!’

“How different, indeed, is this Don Facundo to my beloved uncle Don Lorenzo! He resembles him in nothing. Instead of his open and placid countenance, there is an expression of mystery in Don Facundo’s, which with the frequent lowering of the brow, and the habitual curve of his lip, give him a most disagreeable and severe aspect. Besides which there is an earnestness, and sometimes a wildness in his look, which alarms me. Yet you would be astonished to see how soon his features assume a different turn; how they smooth and bend to a smile. In the five minutes he remained with us, I observed several variations in his countenance.

There was at the same time a tear in his eye and a smile upon his lip. I half expected to see a different expression in each side of his face. When he passed between his servants he raised himself higher on his heels, and cast such haughty looks around him, that the poor fellows seemed ready to drop on their knees for mercy.

“ Instead of coming next day, as he had promised, he sent another messenger to say, that he was very sorry to be deprived of the pleasure of seeing us, as he was obliged to accompany their Majesties to Aranjuez; but that, in less than a month, he should return, and hoped we would then do him the favour of dining with him. You may imagine that my uncle felt hurt at such a conduct; but he is resolved to take no further notice of him; and after the tumultuous scenes we have witnessed, we cannot think of continuing any longer here.

“ As an evidence of the state of this city, I shall now describe to you what I myself have seen from the balcony of our rooms, which look

into the Calle de las Carretas and the Puerta del Sol.

“ From an early hour in the morning of the 14th of last month, something unusual and alarming seemed about to take place. The men, as they walked along the streets, rattled their sabres against the pavement, or carried their arms under their cloaks. Groups of *manolos* were every where stationed, their expressive looks shewing their anxiety. It seemed as if the multitude had every where awoke with the same feelings, and taken the same resolution. The blind-men, in their usual snuffling tone, gave out, without being listened to, the bulletin of the new miracle, or the romance of the last execution; the aguadores, seated on their jugs near the fountain, seemed to forget their business, to converse now with noisy mirth, and now with mystery. The soldiers on guard at the post office participated in the curiosity and indignation of the groups. The manchegos stopped their droves of asses and oxen in the middle of the

Plaza, to add a few curses to those of the Valencian porters ; and some old women, wrapped up in their petticoats, turned over their heads as mantillas, whispered mysteriously to some of the young men, and looked like sybils delivering their omens and advice.

“ On the 15th the crowd increased considerably, and the cry ‘ to Aranjuez ’ being uttered unanimously, the whole mass moved with one impulse, like the billows of the sea, pushing on with increased force, and every moment becoming more irresistible.

“ It was an extraordinary spectacle to see that mass of people moving now noisily, then silently, and joining to the dignity of the long cloak that variety of dress which distinguishes our different provinces and classes. All ranks were mixed and confounded in one mass, and one feeling alone seemed to animate them all ; but the rabble of Lavapie, who in similar instances assume the privilege of directing the popular fury, hastened to the head of the cortege as others hasten to a

feast, accompanied by women, with their children hanging at the breast, who hurried on, 'afraid,' as they said, 'that their husbands might be there first to tear out the heart of the public enemy.' With their sleeves tucked up, their hands armed with the long knife, their grey dishevelled tresses floating over their shoulders, and their distorted mouths uttering imprecations, they looked like the infernal witches executing their black ministries.

" On the 20th we received the following letter from Don Facundo :—

" ' Rejoice, my dear brother, rejoice ! the monster is no longer the arbiter of our lives and properties. We have succeeded in our plans ; Charles has abdicated in favour of his son Ferdinand.

" ' On the night of the 16th, the infamous Godoy, and their wicked Majesties, fixed on their departure. We had already assembled a multitude of people, who were ready to act on the first

signal. Don Ferdinand and Don Carlos, who expect the French army as their liberators and avengers, and who certainly are such, refused to accompany their Majesties out of the kingdom; but would you believe that the insolent Godoy, irritated at this refusal, had the sacrilege to shake his cane at our beloved Ferdinand, and to say, that he would carry him away by force if he would not go voluntarily! Insolent wretch! I was at that time present, and saw with grief that we should be robbed of our beloved Prince, if I found no means to prevent it. I pretended to take the side of Charles, and reasoned with Ferdinand on the expediency of the measure. Having thus removed any suspicion, I told the Prince in a whisper, to inform the garde-du-corps who was stationed at the door of his apartment, when not observed, that they wished to carry him away by force.

He did so; the guard communicated it to his comrades, and these to the people, who, prepared for the event, directed their steps to

the traitor Godoy's palace, with the intention of tearing him to pieces. Assisted by darkness he escaped; but the people kept watch about the palace all night, and between twelve and one, hearing a noise in the *patio*, some of them attempted to enter it. The hussars who guarded it had the imprudence to fire on them, and in a moment the torrent broke its bounds, and the house was entered by an indignant populace, who destroyed in an instant the plunder of years; but all their searches for the tyrant were useless. The King with all the family presented himself on the balcony, and assured the people he had no intention to quit the kingdom; they shed tears of joy, and greeted him with the most hearty cheerings.

“ ‘ The 18th passed in the most tranquil manner; but as our object was not yet accomplished, we laboured incessantly till the 19th, when the scene was renewed with redoubled force, and the traitor was at last found hid in a garret of his own palace, covered over with mats.

He had about him some trinkets, which his avaricious soul could not part with, even at that critical moment, and two pistols, with which he durst neither shoot himself nor those whom but a few days before he had so much affected to despise; but wretches who are proud and insolent in prosperity are always mean and cowardly in adversity. The people were on the point of tearing him to pieces, but the magnanimous Ferdinand came, and his life was spared at his prayer, after promising them that he should be tried, and if found guilty, condemned. Notwithstanding the protection of the Prince, and that of the gardes-du-corps who accompanied him, he received some blows, which disfigured a little that face whose beauty had made his fortune and the ruin of the nation. He was taken to the barracks of the Royal Guards, where he was watched with the greatest care, and every one withdrew quietly home.

“ “ It was not, however, our interest that things should remain in this tranquil state; seeing

therefore, that the best way to succeed in obtaining the abdication, was to urge the measure of their departure, which would alone enrage the populace ; I spoke to the king and queen, and persuaded them to resolve on it, advising them to send off previously *Manuelito*^a to Granada, for which purpose a royal carriage was ordered. When this was ready (about four in the afternoon) I gave information to our friends, and the people, properly worked up beforehand, went in great numbers to the barracks, and dashed the carriage to atoms. The king and queen were alarmed at the menacing cries of the people, who uttered the most horrible imprecations at them for having thus broken their word ; Charles proposed *of his own accord* to resign the crown in favour of his son. I immediately informed the people of it from the balcony of the palace, and this news was received with unexampled enthusiasm.

“ ‘ Such are the services I have rendered our

^a Manuel Godoy, or Manuelito, as the queen called him.

country within these few days, and such the origin and termination of the events which have occurred here, and which I have laid open to you with unreserved confidence, as the best proof I could give you of my unlimited affection. I need not recommend secrecy, because you are aware of its importance. I shall only add that the traitor was sent off under a strong escort to the castle of Villaviciosa, and that he no sooner saw his life in danger than he cried out, he would confess all. Profligate wretch ! whose crimes are equal to his cowardice ! he ought to know, that though Providence is sometimes slow to do justice, it always follows in the end.

‘ Yours most tenderly,

‘ FACUNDO.’

“ Such is the epistle we received from that uncle whom it is impossible I can ever esteem. His intriguing spirit, his dissimulation, and his ingratitude towards those who have done every thing for him, show him an unprincipled and

ambitious egotist, capable of sacrificing his best friends to gain his purpose.

“ On the 22d, eighteen thousand French troops entered Madrid with Murat at their head. A few days before, Ferdinand had sent a Spanish general to enquire their route, and to take care that nothing should be wanting for their reception. On the following day Ferdinand made his public entry amidst the enthusiastic cheering of the people, who almost idolize him, founding in him all their future hopes.

“ The conduct of Murat to him, at first, excited some surprise, and raised the suspicions of many. We know that before his arrival here he spoke without any reserve of the king, his ministers, and his creatures, and that he declared he came to vindicate Ferdinand's innocence ; instead of which he has not visited him once, or taken any measures to recognise him as a king ; nay, he carries his insolence and pride so far as to take no notice of him, though he has met him several times in the street, not

considering that he thus affronts the whole nation in the person of its chief. But he says, that the abdication of Charles, being produced by violence and tumult, is null and void, and will never be acknowledged by the Emperor, because it might be supposed throughout Europe that his troops had come into Spain to dethrone an ally; and that at all events he would not acknowledge any other king than Charles, till his master gave him other instructions.

“ Since then, however, he has become more tractable, and we have been informed, that Don Facundo has frequent interviews with him, and that every thing will soon be amicably adjusted. Two or three days ago, a French quarter-master arrived here to prepare the palace for his Imperial Majesty. Several waggons came at the same time with inscriptions purporting to contain articles of furniture belonging to Napoleon; but which were found to be full of contraband goods! From one of them, however, the quarter-master took out a hat and a pair of boots,

which he called *imperiales*, and which he placed in the royal dormitory of the kings of Spain.

“ Murat also gave great details of the manner in which he wished things to be disposed, and said, that his master’s delicacy would not allow Ferdinand to defray the expences of a table for thirty people, who would always dine with his Imperial Majesty, with another of a hundred for his attendants. Ferdinand, however, answered, that he must not be deprived of the pleasure of entertaining such a guest, and confirmed the orders he had already given,—that whatsoever expences should be incurred by his Imperial Majesty should be paid out of the public purse; besides the illuminations, fire-works, fêtes, public spectacles, and every thing else which marks great public rejoicings. As it was reported that he would be here in three days time, one of the ministers was occupied in calling together the *maestranzas*^a, another in arranging the balls that

^a Chivalric associations formed by youths of noble families.

are to be given in El Buen Retiro, and the magistrates in getting every thing else ready for his reception.

“Yesterday, however, it was confidently rumoured that Napoleon is not coming so soon, and that Ferdinand and the Infante Don Carlos are going in a few days to Burgos, to meet him; being invited to take this step by General Savary, who, they say, is a man consummate in the knowledge of the great world, or in other words, in the art of deceiving mankind, and who is just arrived from France. These have been busy days for Don Facundo, who is the principal agent between Murat and Ferdinand; and who, in conjunction with the Dukes Infantado and San Carlos, and the canon Don Juan Escoiquez, has strongly advised Ferdinand to the projected departure, in which he means to accompany him.

“Such are the scenes I have lately witnessed. How different from those I had just left! My uncle says, he is quite as much disgusted as I

am with all he sees and hears. Interest or ambition seems to govern all, one intrigue supplants another, and principle, honor, and patriotism would be thought Quixotic by every one about the court. How miserable to be compelled to pass one's life with such people ! I never return from the visits of ceremony, which my uncle and I are obliged to pay, without feeling grateful that I do not belong to any one there, and that those I love are indeed worthy all my affection and esteem.—Dear Esteban, how happy I shall be to return to you ! In a few weeks, perhaps earlier, we shall meet, the happier for this little separation. At any rate, you will find absence has made no alteration in the sentiments of your affectionate and sincere

“ ISABELLA.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Peace, so loved, away is fled ;
War now leaves his iron bed ;
To your arms, avengers dread !
Strike, oh strike at tyranny !

British War Song.

Not many days elapsed after receiving the above letter, before the Marquis and Isabella arrived at our house. They both seemed heartily tired of Madrid, and of their noble friends ; and Don Lorenzo proceeded to seek in Don Ignacio's friendship that consolation after which his heart panted so much, and which he had sought in vain from his treacherous brother.

My happiness at seeing Isabella again was, for the first few moments, more than I can describe. The secret I had to disclose, my fears,

doubts, embarrassments, were all forgotten in the delight of seeing her once more, and reading in her animated countenance, that I was as dear to her as ever. Yet soon the recollection of the change that had taken place in my circumstances, and fears of the impression the knowledge of it might make on her mind, threw a restraint over my manner, which she quickly perceived. The eye of affection is very observant. —Isabella soon saw that all was not right with me, and too ingenuous to conceal her feelings, she took the first opportunity of our being alone together, to ask me the reason of the change which had taken place. It was some time before I could answer her. At last, ashamed of my weakness, I checked my feelings, and repeated to her, as coherently as I could, all Don Ignacio had told me. “And now,” added I, “if you too abandon me—if you, like those who once loved me, mean to cast me from you, tell me so now—let me know all my misery at once.”

“Cruel Esteban!” exclaimed she, “why

should you suspect me of being so heartless? Have I merited such an opinion?"

"No, Isabella, no," cried I, clasping her hand in mine, "but I know not what I say. You can never be mine.—I am miserable.—You are for ever lost to me! Though your uncle might have accepted a son of Don Ignacio's, can I hope he would listen to the pretensions of a poor foundling?—No, I must be abandoned, forgotten, perhaps despised."

"Never, never!" exclaimed Isabella, with ardour, and clasping both my hands in hers, "never can I abandon or forget you—my dear Esteban," continued she, more calmly—"let us look at things on the bright side. Though Don Ignacio is not your father, he will still consider you as his son; he will give you a profession, and an opportunity of gaining wealth, consideration, and, what you say you prize more, the hand of Isabella. If that will animate you to distinguish yourself, be assured my uncle will not refuse it to you;—but are you quite sure,"

added she, with a smile, “that that will repay you?—The way is long and difficult.”

“Were it ten thousand times more so, I could brave it cheerfully for the hope you have held out. Dearest Isabella, you restore me to life. I shall find no study too deep, no exertion too great, if I may look forward to call you one day mine.”

“Be assured,” said she, “it depends entirely on yourself. My uncle, I repeat it, will not oppose my wishes; and, so far from your want of birth being an objection in my eyes, I shall prize the honours you may gain for yourself, much more than any that might have been transmitted to you from your ancestors.—Courage, dearest Esteban, let us look forward, and doubt not that all will be well.”

Alas! the time was fast approaching, when these sweet hopes, these resolves, formed in all the enthusiasm of a youthful attachment, were to be sacrificed to higher and more imperious duties.

Ferdinand had quitted Madrid for Bayonne, on the 10th of April, notwithstanding all the arguments and attempts that every where were made by the people to impede his journey to France. Immediately on his arrival at Bayonne, he was visited by the Emperor, who embraced him, and gave him every demonstration of regard. The Emperor took leave of him with fresh embraces, and immediately after sent Duroc, the Marshal of the Palace, to invite him to dinner, and one of his own coaches to convey him to the palace of Marac, where he was received with every mark of attention, and where the two monarchs dined together.

Hardly had Ferdinand returned to his own apartment, when General Savary arrived to inform him, that the Emperor had irrevocably determined that the race of the Bourbons should no longer govern Spain, and that his own should succeed in their room, for which purpose he was to renounce for ever, in his own name, and that

of all his house, all right and title to the crown of Spain, and the Indies !

It was a long time before Ferdinand and the persons about him could do more than look at each other in mute astonishment, as if they had been struck with lightning and deprived of their speech. Unfortunately, none of them had either firmness of character, or wisdom sufficient to enable them to encounter circumstances of such difficulty. Ferdinand himself, forgetting his duty to the nation, and yielding to his own personal fears, thought only of saving himself, and shortly after signed the abdication which had been prepared for him.

No sooner was the news of the events which had occurred at Bayonne received in the different provinces of Spain, than the inhabitants rose in a mass to avenge on the French the affront that had been offered to the nation. I had just then commenced my third year of study at the university ; but from that instant every thing was

suspended; the colleges were closed; the students rushed forward to exchange their pens for swords, and their gowns for military habits. The cry of war resounded every where. Nothing was to be seen but soldiers, or rather armed peasants, all anxious to march against the enemy, all loudly calling for a leader.

None were idle at such a crisis—the wife was busy in furnishing her husband's knapsack—the sisters in decorating their brothers' hats with ribbons and cockades, bearing patriotic inscriptions—the tender mistress, uniting love and devotion, was inclosing some of her own hair in a scapulary for her lover's bosom, at once to protect him from danger, and remind him of herself—and the nuns of the different convents doubled their prayers and penances from the moment they heard that the French were advancing in a hostile manner. They passed the greatest part of the night in singing hymns for the success of the Spanish cause, and during the day they employed themselves in making cartridges, and

in preparing medicines and comforts for the wounded :—all anxious for the salvation of their country—all were bidding their husbands, brothers, lovers, and friends be brave.—What a noble and sublime sight was that of a whole nation, thus rising suddenly and spontaneously to arms, and with one accord marching against the invaders of their country !

These events changed the face of Europe, and clearly demonstrated, that the real strength of states does not consist so much in the number or force of their regular armies, as in that patriotic feeling which is alone powerful enough to interest every individual of a nation in the public cause as if it were his own.

Napoleon, accustomed to consider a nation only by its military force, believed that Spain, once deprived of her chiefs, (and his troops possessed of the capital), would prefer the government of a stranger to the scourge of war in the very heart of the country. He imagined, that all he had now to do was to organize in

the capital a military government, and that the fate of Spain was then decided, as had been the case in Prussia, Austria, Italy, &c.

Misled by such erroneous suppositions, he counted for nothing the spirit that animated the Spanish citizens; their untamed character, their mild climate, which admits of living in the open air almost all the year, and of abandoning their dwellings upon any occasion; their inaccessible mountainous retreats; the facilities afforded by the sea (which washes such extensive shores,) for multiplying forces, by rapidly transporting them to those points on which the enemy were weak, or for securing escape from pursuit—all the great circumstances arising from their national character, their pride and hatred of foreign intruders, their constancy and perseverance under repeated misfortunes; such were the great points which Napoleon, in his calculations disregarded, and which were the cause of his final overthrow.

At the period of this general rising, I was

just entering my sixteenth year ; yet though young, I had caught the spark of patriotic enthusiasm. I longed to be a warrior ; and to show my father how capable I was to support the fatigues of war, I performed a thousand extravagant feats. Sometimes when he went from town into the neighbouring villages to give directions, and make arrangements to forward the common cause, I followed him on foot, loaded with a gun and a knapsack, constantly refusing to ride or be taken up behind him. Often I passed the whole day without taking any food ; and at other times remained all night out of doors as sentinel. My good father, pleased to see my ardour, far from checking, encouraged it, and frequently intrusted me with commissions for the Alcaldes of some of the neighbouring villages, which I never failed to execute with great exactness.

I was not a little proud of the honors paid me on such occasions. Frequently the Alcalde called a meeting of the inhabitants of the vil-

lage, by the ringing of bells, as is customary, and when all were assembled in the town-hall, I read with an air of importance the message of which I was the bearer, and gave them all the news of which I was possessed. After this, the assembly usually gave four cheers, one to Spain, another to Religion, a third to the King, and a fourth to the Orator. They would then conduct me either to the house of the curate or to that of the Alcalde, where I was caressed and toasted by all the people present.

Thus I began to look upon myself as a most important little personage, when we received the unwelcome news of the immediate approach of the French, with a powerful army.

General Cuesta, who was at that period in Valladolid, organizing the inhabitants and peasantry of that city and neighbourhood, marched to oppose the progress of the enemy. He took up a position at Cabezón, a village two leagues in advance of Valladolid, where, yielding to the

impatience of the people, he offered battle, much against his own inclination.

At that time, indeed, the Spanish generals, like their government, had authority only so long as they acted in unison with the feelings of those whom they commanded. Whether successful or unfortunate, they were equally obliged to submit to the will of their troops, or rather armed peasants. Those leaders who were imprudent enough to act contrary to it were immediately branded with the name of traitors, and literally torn to pieces by the enraged populace. There was hardly a large town in Spain that had not its victim.

Indeed, so great was the ferment at that period among the people, that it knew no bounds in its display. To them every general was a hero and a demigod as long as he was successful; but if any untoward accident disappointed them of their hopes, their adoration was turned into hatred, and then "the traitor" must fall.

It is painful to record how many innocent men were sacrificed to the mad fury of a people always ready to exonerate themselves, and attribute their defeats to the treachery of leaders, when often they arose from their own want of discipline.—Cevallos, a general to whom the command of Segovia had been intrusted, and who was unable to prevent the French from possessing themselves of that city, (not, however, from his pretended understanding with the enemy, but from the inferiority of his troops,) fell in Valladolid by the hands of the mob, a few days before Cuesta gave battle on the heights of Cabezon.

As soon as the latter general found that Cevallos was likely to be sacrificed to popular fury, he had sent to Avila, where he then was, a party of cavalry, with orders to convey him safe to his presence, and have him tried; but principally with the intention of screening him from the ferocity of the people. Cevallos set off from

that city accompanied by his wife and children, and escorted by the few cavalry soldiers who had been sent in search of him. In his way to Valladolid he suffered a thousand insults, and more than once had his life attempted. On coming within half a mile of Valladolid, the unfortunate man, as if foreseeing the fate that awaited him within its gates, and wishing to spare his unhappy wife the horrible sight of his death, alighted from the carriage, and mounting a saddle horse, pushed forward escorted by only two soldiers, the rest remaining round the carriage. The news of his approach had already spread throughout the city, and a crowd of the lowest rabble hurried along to the city gates. No sooner had he entered, than one of the market women cast a large stone at his head, which unfortunately struck him on the temple and brought him down. Immediately a mass of people, armed with all sorts of weapons, fell on his prostrate body, and in less than five

minutes it was a mangled corpse. It will scarcely be credited, perhaps, that one of these tygers in human shape, after stabbing him with his knife, drank of the blood that gushed out from the wound ! His fainting wife entered the city shortly after, and the barbarous populace, exulting in their cruelty, received her with the severed limbs of her husband stuck on poles, sticks, swords, and daggers ! To such a pitch of frenzy had the wild effervescence of popular feeling arrived.

But these excesses, though deeply to be lamented, do not impeach that ardent patriotism which urged men from the most distant provinces to present themselves at head-quarters at the first call, and patiently to support privations to which all the power of the severest discipline could never have subjected the best regular troops. This love of country was not only ardent but pure, the only military distinction of which they seemed ambitious being a red ribbon

with the inscription—"Vencer o' morir pro Patria et pro Ferdinando Septimo."^a

My brother Raymundo and myself, participating in the general ardour, and being now old enough to bear arms, were enlisted in one of the cavalry corps that were just then organizing at Valladolid. Officers were so much wanted to command the thousands of peasants who flocked thither, that our general being compelled to select them from among the youths who had just enlisted, Raymundo was made lieutenant, and I *alferez*.^b

We now devoted ourselves with all the ardour of youth and patriotism to the service in which we were engaged ; but we found it almost impossible to command obedience from those who had been intrusted to our care. Not that they felt indignant at being under the command of such

^a To die or conquer for our country and for Ferdinand VII.

^b An intermediate rank in the Spanish army between cornet and lieutenant.

mere youths as we were ; for they were greatly attached to us ; but because they had taken up an idea that military discipline was not necessary to enable them to fight against the French, whom they considered as heretics who could not conquer because God was against them. In vain we repeated to them those verses of one of our poets : —

Vinieron los Saracenos,
Y nos molieron á palos ;
Que Dios protege á los malos,
Quando son mas que los buenos.*

One of them who had just arrived from Burgos told us very seriously, that ever since the entry of the French into Spain, the bones of Count Gonzalez had been heard to rattle in their tomb,—a miracle which never happened but when we were on the point of gaining a battle.—Then, said I to him, “the Count is turned traitor, for the only thing like a battle

* The Saracens came and thrashed us soundly ; for Heaven assists the wicked when they are in greater numbers than the good.

which has yet been fought, was won by the French.”^a

“By no means,” replied he hastily, “the Count is loyal yet ; for besides that the affray of Tudela was no battle, it is related as certain that the French general was seen on the night before the battle, just as the clock struck twelve, on a solitary spot, surrounded with flames, and killing a black hen ; which you know, means selling his soul to the devil. It is not strange, then, that he should have won the battle ; but let him come now to Cabezon, and you will see that he will lose it, for I’ll warrant you he will not find another soul to sell !”

The day before our departure for Cabezon, as I passed through the great square to go to the Campo Grande, I observed a greater degree of bustle than usual among the crowd, which

^a The first battle fought in Spain with any thing like an army, was that of Cabezon. The above alludes to a little affray near Tudela of Navarre between a few Spanish troops and some French, in which the latter had the advantage.

consisted of no less than eight or ten thousand people in separate groups, all eagerly looking up and pointing to the skies.—“There! don’t you see it?” was all I could hear. Curious to ascertain what it was which excited their attention, I stopped and looked up, without being able to discover anything. “What is it you see?” enquired I of a friar who was bustling from one side to the other, pointing upwards and explaining it to other people.

“A large crown, a sword and palm in the heavens,” said he, “made of stars—which means the crown of martyrdom for our King Ferdinand VII., the sword of justice for the people, and the palm of victory for Spain!”

I again looked up, but in vain; I could see nothing—“I see them!” was uttered from a larger group further on—“A miracle! a miracle!”

No sooner was the word “miracle” uttered by one, than it spread from mouth to mouth, till the whole city resounded with it. I could

scarcely help smiling at the wild superstition of the deluded people ; but as it would have been dangerous to have even looked incredulous, I was endeavouring to make my way quietly through the crowd, when I heard a great confusion not far from me.—“Down with him !” was the general cry—“He is a traitor, let us drag him.”^a

As I was on horseback and dressed in my uniform, I easily opened myself a way, and with indescribable alarm perceived the Marquis struggling with several fellows who had collared him, and were loading him with every opprobrious name. At such a crisis the word “traitor” was of itself sufficient to inflame a mob ; but still more when their imaginations, heated by superstition, had roused their passions almost to phrenzy. In a few minutes he must have fallen a sacrifice. Fortunately terror did not deprive

^a In Spain the usual punishment inflicted by the mob on such occasions consists in tying a rope round the neck of their victim and dragging him till he is dead.

me of my presence of mind. "Gentlemen!" cried I, "I am sent by the authorities to secure this person, in order that he may be tried according to the laws; I trust, therefore, in conformity with that obedience which you have always shewn to them, you will give him up to me, that I may conduct him immediately before the magistrates."

The stratagem succeeded; the people gave several cheers, and the Marquis was marched off to the Consistorio,^a which was in the same square. With great difficulty I protected him from the blows that were aimed at him, as we passed the crowd, that pressed forward, eager to see a traitor. As soon as we reached the Consistorio, I dismounted, and returning thanks to the people for their kind co-operation, desired they would retire; for the traitor was now secured. They were not, however, to be quite so easily dismissed. Some of them in-

^a The town-house.

sisted on seeing him imprisoned, and I was obliged to send for the officer on guard, who happened to be known to me, and request him to confine the person I brought in a solitary dungeon. This being done, the crowd withdrew, satisfied at seeing him safe in the hands of justice, and again vociferating “ a miracle !”

As soon as they were gone, I was introduced to the Marquis, and eagerly enquired the cause of the people’s fury against him :—“ My dear Esteban,” exclaimed he, embracing me with warmth, “ I owe my life to you a second time. I should certainly have fallen a victim to the fury of these fanatics, but for your interposition.”

“ But what was the cause ?” exclaimed I.

“ My own imprudence. I was incautious enough to say there was nothing of starry crowns, swords, or palms to be seen in the sky, and that all was a vision of their brains ; for I had as good eyes as any of them, and could see nothing.”

The officer on guard no sooner heard who the

prisoner was, than he led him to the back door of the Consistorio, and let him out without being observed. On my return to the principal door, I met all the Franciscan friars, whose convent is in the same square, drawn up in procession and bringing an image of the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus in her arms, and another of St. Joseph. An immense crowd of people surrounded and followed the friars, who were coming to place those images on the principal balcony of the Consistorio, in honor of the great miracle which they said *we* had witnessed !

CHAPTER IX.

——— “ We will not part !

My hand may perish, or my friends may flee,
Farewell to life, but not adieu to thee !”

LORD BYRON.

THE day of our departure for Cabezón now arrived. Every thing was ready ; I had only to take leave of Isabella. She had given me a ribbon with an inscription appropriate to the occasion, and was now tying it round my *shakoo*^a with a trembling hand.—“ Fear nothing, my beloved,” said I, kissing her pale cheek, “ I shall return to thee again ; nay, dry those tears ; you would not wish me to remain here ?”

“ No, Esteban, do not think me weak enough

^a Military Cap.

for that ; I should even cease to love you as I do, if I saw you by my side instead of in the field of honour, where our country calls you ; but I cannot part with you in the possibility of seeing you no more, without some fears."

"Dearest Isabella !" cried I folding her in my arms, "think not of the danger, think rather of the happiness of meeting again, when I shall have shown myself worthy of your love. Isabella and my country shall be my watchword, and this gift of yours shall lead me on wherever duty and honour call me."

Raymundo and myself, having now taken leave of our friends, joined our squadron, and proceeded with other troops from the Plaza Mayor to Cabezón. In our way thither the wives, children, sisters, and mothers, followed us, some loaded with provisions, and others carrying arms and the knapsacks. They all went along singing and dancing, striking their panderetas,^a and their castanets, as if they were

^a Timbrels.

going to a festival. In reality it looked more like a *romeria* to a hermitage than a military march.

Having reached Cabezon, General Cuesta placed our troops, and the little artillery we had, on the different heights which crown the village, and disposed the whole in such a skilful manner, that two thousand well-disciplined men would have been sufficient to have arrested the progress of the eighteen thousand French troops that were advancing. But it was not likely that an ill-organized body of fourteen thousand peasants, many without arms, could successfully contend against an enemy well-disciplined, well-armed, and well-commanded. The Spanish General, therefore, unable to trust to the experience of his troops, was obliged to confide chiefly in the strength of his position ; —but even that failed.

After various false alarms, such as mistaking a distant drove of oxen for a body of the enemy's cavalry, a flock of sheep for a regiment of

infantry, and several peasants, with their ploughs glittering in the sun, for cannon—on the 12th of June the enemy really appeared on the road of Burgos in great numbers, and not long afterwards the skirmishes began.

As I was with our corps on the other side of the bridge, in advance of our position, we met a picquet of the enemy's cavalry coming to reconnoitre. We fell on them, and, thanks to our numbers, drove them back. This little success emboldened our men, who pushed forward pursuing the French. Presently, however, their artillery began to play upon our troops, and no sooner did the balls whistle above the heads of our men, than one of them exclaimed—"Zounds they fire with ball! Adios, Señores," and off he went, nearly as swiftly as the balls themselves. This seemed as a signal for the rest, and in a moment the Captain, Raymundo, and myself were left alone, having vainly endeavoured to rally them. Our only resource now was to try to gain the bridge, and join the body of students,

who were defending themselves most gallantly against an overwhelming force of the enemy ; but as they were unsupported by the rest of our troops, (who almost all, seized with a panic of terror, were flying precipitately on all sides) the French succeeded in getting possession of the bridge, and overpowering the students, who, almost to a man, fell victims to their heroic patriotism.

From that instant the whole of our army dispersed in the greatest confusion, throwing down their arms and every thing else. Raymundo and myself seeing it impossible to gain the bridge before the enemy, and aware there was no ford, (for in attempting to pass the river two or three hundred of our army were drowned), rode along the river banks till we came to the water mills opposite Isabella's Island. Here we followed the road to Cigales, and reached Valladolid about three in the afternoon.

On entering our house, we found the whole family in the greatest confusion, preparing to

fly from the enemy, and in the utmost alarm on our account. Our appearance changed their fears into transports of joy. Tears, prayers, and embraces for a few moments banished every other thought. "Thank God you are safe," whispered Isabella, as I folded her in my arms. But there was no time to indulge in these delicious emotions. As the fugitives arrived, the news of the French advancing on the city gained ground, and the alarm became so general, that in a moment the opposite road to that by which the French were advancing was crowded with thousands of inhabitants of all ages and conditions.

It was a heart-rending scene to see the old and infirm dragging themselves along and falling at every step; infants of four and five years old crying in search of their parents; the disconsolate and terrified mother running wildly in quest of her children; carts loaded with sick and dying persons; women encumbered with children, ready to drop with fatigue; young men bearing

on their backs aged fathers or mothers. On every countenance one might see depicted terror and grief; the most lamentable cries struck the ear, and penetrated the heart, and every where the utmost confusion and distress prevailed. But how is it possible to draw a picture of that mournful scene, when language has no words to express the anguish of the heart? One fact alone I will mention, which left a powerful impression on my mind, and which may serve to give an idea of the distress attending our flight.

As we were proceeding through by-ways, the high road being impassable, we overtook a young woman leading a mule loaded with two large trunks. She was crying bitterly for the loss of her husband, who had been killed in that day's battle. She was now a destitute widow, and her whole property was in those two trunks. Before she could relate more of her melancholy story we reached our country house on the banks of the Duero, and invited her in for the night. We found it crowded with strangers,

who had taken up their quarters there. They were all welcome, and we managed for ourselves as well as we could. The young woman who came with us, begged her two trunks might be deposited carefully in one of the rooms, and taking a key from her pocket, she eagerly opened them; but what was the horror and surprise of all present at finding a dead infant in each! The grief of the unfortunate mother cannot be described; she fell into dreadful convulsions, in which we thought she would have expired. At last a torrent of tears came to relieve her, and having recovered the power of speech, she informed us that when she received the news of her husband's death, and of the advance of the French army, her children were both lying ill of the small-pox. The physician told her that their lives depended on not being exposed to the air: but no carriage or covered cart was to be had. To remain in the town was impossible, and, therefore, having with great difficulty procured a mule, she placed her babes

in the trunks and hurried away. Her grief and the continual alarms during the journey, made her quite forget that if exposure to the air were dangerous, the total want of it must prove fatal.

Scenes of almost equal distress with this happened every day ; and few towns in Spain were exempted from them during Bonaparte's invasion.

We shared that night what provisions we had with our fellow-sufferers, and at day-light resumed our flight, which for several successive days we continued as the French advanced. The sufferings and privations which many hundreds of poor fugitives endured, were dreadful. For ourselves, as we were still in a part of the country, where many relatives and friends resided, we had no reason to complain. At length we arrived at San Miguel del Monte, a retired village in which my father had a small estate, and where all our family, with the Marquis and Isabella, established themselves.

Here we were joined by several of our friends, and passed some time quite undisturbed, nay, I might have added, contented, had the anxiety for the success of our cause allowed us to enjoy the society that we possessed, or had we been insensible to the evils which afflicted our beloved country. This degree of tranquillity, however, did not last long. On one side the French army daily approached; on the other, the English under Sir John Moore; and soon the country around us became the scene of action between the advanced posts.

This was a busy period for my brother and myself. Every skirmish that took place, we contrived to witness from some eminence; and we often walked six or seven leagues for the express purpose of seeing them. My father had absolutely forbidden our attending such exhibitions; but it was impossible for us to suppress our curiosity.

In these excursions we frequently encountered the mutilated bodies of Frenchmen who had

been assassinated, and bloody fragments of their clothing strewed up and down. The struggles that some of these poor wretches had made before expiring, were still to be traced on the ground where they were lying. A few buttons, and the brass plates of their military caps, were the only marks of their having once been soldiers or Frenchmen. They had been killed by wandering peasants, whose dwellings had been burnt or destroyed by the enemy. The sole occupation of these peasants now was to watch the proceedings of the French, and to lie in ambush near the high roads, to surprise the couriers and the ordnance, or to fall suddenly upon such detachments as they reckoned inferior to themselves in strength. Those soldiers also who had strayed from the main body, were sure to be the victims of a just revenge.

In the same manner, the garrisons left on the military roads, to keep the country in check, were continually attacked. The soldiers were obliged, for safety, to construct little citadels,

by repairing old ruined castles, or fortifying the churches. In the plains, the posts of communication entrenched themselves in one or two of the houses at the entrance of each village. The sentinels dared not remain without the fortified enclosures, for fear of being carried off; they therefore stationed themselves on a tower, or on a wooden scaffolding, built on the roof of a house, to observe what passed in the surrounding country.

When large detachments of French troops passed through unfrequented villages, which were still inhabited, the first impulse of the people was to hide themselves, or fly to the woods; but when no chance of escape appeared, alcaldes, women, and children, all came forth to meet them, as if every thing was at peace, and nothing was heard but the rustic songs of the people. As soon, however, as the detachment had passed, the different labours in which each man was occupied were suspended, and every one brought out his weapon from its hiding-

place to harass the enemy, or destroy the rear-guard.

In the frequent skirmishes which the French advanced posts had with the English, it often happened, that the former being put to flight and dispersed, straggling parties would enter the villages, inquiring after their comrades. The peasants never neglected these favourable opportunities; they directed them to places where other peasants were waiting in ambush, and where the whole party inevitably perished. When fresh troops arrived to revenge the death of their comrades, they found nothing but deserted villages on which to wreak their vengeance, and by destroying these they only diminished their own resources for the future.

I shall never forget the day, when, in one of our excursions, we came to a village called Valdestillas, which is about five-and-twenty miles from Valladolid. It was completely demolished except one or two houses. Among the still smoking ruins, we could see some mangled bo-

dies, apparently of the inhabitants. While we were looking at this melancholy spectacle, a countryman passed hastily on towards a little wood close by. We followed him in the hope of learning some particulars, and on reaching the wood, found about a dozen young peasants surrounding a man of middle age, and conversing very earnestly. The gloomy sternness in the countenance of the elder peasant, and the fire that flashed from the eyes of the young ones whenever they turned them on the smoking village beneath, sufficiently explained the subject of their conversation.

On our inquiring the cause of the destruction of the village, one of them told us that a party of French had entered it the evening before, and committed such wanton cruelties on the inhabitants, as to rouse them in their own defence. 'They then maintained a desperate struggle for some time; but being unarmed, they were at last overpowered by the French, who massacred all who had not been fortunate

enough to escape, after which they set the village on fire. One house alone escaped the conflagration. In this the French had barricaded themselves, and seemed inclined to stay till the want of provisions should oblige them to change quarters.

“ But that,” added the young man who had spoken, “ they shall never do while I live.”

“ You are one of the sufferers, then ?” cried I.

“ Yesterday,” replied he, “ I had a father ; —but the villains cut him down by my side— and my mother too !”

Here his tears running profusely down his manly cheek, impeded his utterance, and pointing to a heap of ruins, he turned his head away. Too much affected by the poor fellow’s grief to continue our inquiries, we all remained silent for some minutes ; at length, my brother asked them what they meant to do. At this moment a loud burst of drunken merriment, from the house in which the French were, struck our

ears. Never shall I forget the countenance of the elder peasant; his pale cheek became flushed with rage, his lips quivered, and fixing his dark eyes sternly on Raymundo, "Young man," said he, "do you hear those demons' yells?—do you see that house?—it was once my home—it is now the grave of my wife and child—and do you ask," added he, with a bitter smile, "what we mean to do!—rather ask why are we still loitering here?—Come on, my friends, let us die at once—we shall not fall unrevenged."

Saying this, he threw his cloak from him, and snatching a thick club from the hands of one of the peasants, was rushing out of the wood.

"Stay," cried we, earnestly, throwing ourselves before him, "unarmed as you all are, what can you attempt against an enemy double your number, in a fortified house, and provided with arms and ammunition?—It would be throwing away your lives."

With much difficulty we prevailed on him to listen, and pause a few minutes, till some plan

could be devised for effectually punishing these barbarities.

After much deliberation, it was at length agreed that Raymundo and myself should present ourselves to the commanding officer, as if we were in the interest of the French; and say that we were intrusted with an important verbal message from the Commandant of Avilla to the General Governor of Valladolid, and that having met on our road a French courier, accompanied by only two dragoons, who were unable to proceed beyond a neighbouring village (having received advices, that a party of peasants, about twelve in number, were in ambush, waiting for them between this and the other village,) we came to inform him of it, that he might send an equal number of his troop to protect them, as otherwise they ran the chance of being assassinated. If this bait should take, the attack was then to be made on the remaining soldiers, and the sallying party themselves might be cut off on their return.

As we knew very well that the parties posted in the different villages near the principal roads, were placed there on purpose to facilitate the communications, it was natural to expect that this information would be well received, and duly attended to; we therefore went boldly to the house, and demanded to speak to the officer. The sentinel, who paced in front of the house, rattling his empty sabre-sheath along the ground, at first made some difficulties; but having told him we were friends, and had important communications to make, we were conducted to the room where the officer was. We found him half asleep; but on our entering, he started, and carried involuntarily his hand to his sabre. Assured, however, by a glance he cast over us, that he had nothing to apprehend, he, in a mild tone, inquired our business.

Raymundo, who spoke French more fluently than I did, and who also possessed more *sang froid*, delivered our message without any hesita-

tion, adding, that he might act as he thought most prudent, but that for our part we had no time to lose, and must bid him farewell.

The apparently candid manner in which he spoke, and the collected answers he made to all his questions, threw the French officer completely off his guard. He poured forth his ten thousand thanks, embraced us, and insisted on our drinking success to Napoleon, which we declined, on the plea of never drinking wine; after which he allowed us to depart.

We then pretended to continue our journey, but quickly returned to our peasants, who were anxiously waiting for us. Here we remained till one of them, who had been set to watch the motions of the enemy, returned with the news that the officer, with fourteen of his men, had set off for the place we had indicated.

Scarcely waiting till the French were out of sight, we all rushed from our place of concealment, and in an instant set fire to the house in

which the French were lodged. Some of them, running out without their arms, were dispatched immediately; four or five only made a slight resistance. The rest, being probably too much intoxicated to leave the house, must have perished in the flames. That, however, we did not stop to ascertain; but seizing the arms of those who had fallen, we were hastening away, when another peasant apprized us of the return of the sallying party. We all instantly concealed ourselves behind the ruins of a house near to which they must pass, and at their approach rushed upon them, and inflicted on the miscreants a just punishment for the wanton barbarities committed the day before, on the wives and children of these unoffending peasants.

The dead bodies were then taken and thrown into the Duero, which flows near the village, and even their arms and horses would have shared the fate of their masters, had we not pre-

vented it, by suggesting the propriety of taking them to Rueda, and delivering them to the English, who were then there. This was agreed to ; and taking leave of them, we hastened home.

The scene we had just witnessed, and the part we had taken in it, made such a deep impression on our minds, that it was with the greatest difficulty we kept it from our family ; but the uneasiness they would have felt at knowing that we could expose ourselves to such dangers, and the fear of being denied so much liberty in future, made us silent on the subject.

In this way we passed several months, familiarizing ourselves with dangers, and frequently braving them with a boldness which our extreme youth and want of reflection alone could inspire. To accomplish our ends, we were often obliged to have recourse to artifice ; which, though foreign to our principles and feelings, became jus-

tifiable in our eyes, under the existing circumstances. Whatever gave us an opportunity of opposing the enemies of our country, we considered as the just means placed in our hands by Providence, to bring about its deliverance.

CHAPTER X.

*Mudanzas tristes reparo
Doquier la vista se torna !*

CIENFUEGOS.

As long as we remained in San Miguel del Monte, I had the satisfaction of enjoying Isabella's society without any interruption. The time which I did not devote to warlike employments was passed by her side in a tranquil state, which resembled happiness, but which could not be so called, because I had yet much to hope, and still more to fear. We were soon to part, and we knew not whether it might be for ever. At my age, and in the disturbed state in which Spain was at that moment, it could hardly be expected that I should remain long inactive.

Public events were assuming daily a more serious aspect. Napoleon himself was now entering the Peninsula at the head of his Imperial army, and it was not likely that the struggle could be speedily terminated. More and greater dangers, therefore, were preparing, in which it was probable I should participate largely; and the knowledge of which could not but afflict my beloved Isabella, and disturb in me the charm that her presence produced.

After the victory obtained over the Spanish army by Napoleon at Burgos, where he commanded in person, the French advanced again on Valladolid, and found the town still more deserted than at first.—To show to what shifts they were reduced in order to constitute any thing like a government, I shall give here a letter of my father's steward, whom he sent to Valladolid only a few days before the return of the French, and who happened to be still there at the time of their entry into the town.

“ My dear and respected master—I hasten to inform you of an event, at which I am sure

you will smile, and which will dissipate any alarm that my delay might have produced in the minds of my kind master's family.

“ Yesterday, as soon as I heard of the approach of the French, I made my preparations to leave town ; but the troops entered it before I had every thing ready. Wishing, however, to ascertain how far I might succeed in escaping without inconvenience, I walked out of the house, and locked the door without being observed by any of the French soldiers, who were breaking into the adjoining houses. The whole of the town seemed perfectly deserted, and I met only Frenchmen in the streets, who annoyed me with questions, and some with blows. While I was endeavouring to get back home, I was seized by a picquet of soldiers, and carried to the Consistorio, where I met several gentlemen, among whom was Don Juan Martinez,^a the barrister.

^a This gentleman was about sixty years of age, of about four feet and a half in height ; so fat that he could hardly move ; his face not unlike that of a poodle, and his dress always in the fashion of Philip the Fifth's court.

They had all been brought there like myself, and were trembling with fear. I had already prepared myself for the worst, and said my *act of contrition*.^a

“ Presently the French General came in, and asked the soldiers who had brought us there, if they had found no more gentlemen in the town. ‘ No, General,’ — was the reply. — ‘ Well, then,’ said he, addressing himself to us, ‘ elect among yourselves one who may act as Corregidor.—Immediately we named Don Juan Martinez. The poor gentleman trembled like a leaf, and excused himself on account of his age. The General remarked his strange figure and dress.—‘ No,’ said he, turning himself to me, ‘ he would look to some advantage in a caricature, but as a Corregidor he would disgrace the dignity of the rod.’^b You, who look more like

^a The prayer of reconciliation which is said whilst the priest is giving absolution. In cases like the above, it refers to those who are on the point of being executed.

^b The Corregidores carry a rod or rather a cane, as a badge of office.

a man of business, shall be Corregidor, and these gentlemen the Regidores.^a

“ In vain I excused myself by saying that it was a situation above my capacity and station in life; he would not hear me, and here I am a Corregidor, like governor Sancho in his Barratarian Island; but by no means doing such wise things, though still worse handled than he, when his island was invaded by the enemy. Every thing I do that does not please them, falls back upon my poor shoulders with a vengeance, and as I am no conjuror to guess what they want, they are by this time very sore and much in need of Fierabras’ balm to soothe the pain and cure the bruises. I shall, however, give these *Gabachos*^b the slip as soon as I possibly can. Meantime, my dear and respected master, you may freely command the Señor Corregidor,

SANTIAGO PERALTA ”

^a Municipal officers.

^b A nick-name given to the French. It is a corruption of the word *Gabali*, a people about Narbonne. It also means in Spanish a filthy, miserable fellow.

We were much entertained with this letter, and more still when, on the following day, we saw the Señor Corregidor appear, dressed in a French Grenadier's uniform, which he had taken from a box full of them, that had been deposited in the Consistorio. In this disguise he succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the French, who guarded the city gates; but it exposed him to be almost assassinated by the Spanish peasantry, who mistook him for an invader.

The Imperial army having now reached Madrid by way of Somo-Sierra, after defeating the Spaniards in several engagements, my father judged that the struggle might last longer than we at first imagined, and resolved to return with his family to Valladolid; thinking that they would be less exposed in larger cities than in small villages.

After sacrificing, therefore, his money, and plate on the sacred altar of his country, we set off for our home. In our way we passed by our country mansion.—Alas! it was now a heap of

ruins!—Situating on the delightful borders of the Duero, upon an eminence surrounded by small hills, always crowned with the tufted pine tree and the luxuriant vine, it afforded one of the most delightful prospects that can be imagined, commanding an extensive view of the most romantic and varied scenery.

Immediately in front, and at the distance of a quarter of a mile, flows the rapid Duero, between steep hills, on whose slopes the twining vine, the myrtle, the honey-suckle, the cystus, and all kinds of wild flowers grow in the greatest profusion—occupying every space that is left vacant by the mountain shrubs, and forming the wildest and most beautiful clusters. Between the house and the river was a spacious and well stocked garden, watered by a winding rivulet, whose sparkling waters, after dashing down the side of one of the further hills and forming two or three beautiful cascades, gently flow between the thick bushes of the sweet cypress and the water mint, till they reach the garden, where they are shaded by

the umbrageous willow, the mulberry, and the walnut tree, as far as the verdant borders of the Duero, into whose wide bosom they fall.

On one side of the house is a thick wood of tall and majestic trees, whose massive foliage is impenetrable even to the searching rays of our mid-day sun.—The ground below, quite clear of underwood, and covered with a soft mossy turf, forms a delightful promenade. In the midst of this shady retreat, a fountain, issuing from a bare rock, overhung with odoriferous shrubs and wild flowers, adds to the coolness of the place, and after flowing with a gentle murmur down a declivity, forms a little lake below. The banks of this natural basin are adorned with the broad-leafed reed, the junk, the lilac, and many taller shrubs, and are the favorite resort of the nightingale, the thrush, and the black-bird, whose enlivening notes, particularly in the cool of the morning, render that beautiful spot the abode of delight.

To the west of the house is seen the convent

of Abrojo, in the midst of lofty pyramidical cypresses, and wide expanding walnut trees, that throw around an air of awful grandeur and religious solemnity. The steeple of the church rising above the several turrets, which adorn the building, is seen at a great distance, and the heavy sound of its bells is heard still further.

On the opposite banks of the river, the scene is diversified by a vast number of small hills, some of which are clothed with the picturesque cork tree, and the luxuriant vine. They are thrown into a variety of romantic forms, and rise one above the other, till blending their distant azure with the horizon, they disappear gradually from the sight. On the highest of these hills, stands a small village called Buecillo, remarkable for the high steeple of its church, which seems to lose itself in the clouds. On the left hand is the beautiful country house belonging to the Scotch College of Valladolid, proudly standing by itself, as if scorning to associate with the humble cottages that are seen in the

back ground. Its elegant front presents several rows of windows on a stony surface whiter than snow, offering to the eye a striking contrast with the brown brick and mud houses that are irregularly scattered near it. From that house to the river banks extends a delightful Vega,^a covered with vineyards, orchards, woods of cork trees, and verdant pasturages.

Such was the spot where I had enjoyed some of the most delightful moments of my boy-hood. I looked back with regret to those years when nothing disturbed the pleasure of gazing on its beautiful scenery, and my eyes were filled with tears at contemplating the desolation that now reigned around.

To these painful feelings were added others still more bitter. Isabella and the Marquis parted from us the same day that we left these ruins. They were returning to Agreda, and we to Valladolid, to see French faces, and re-

^a A tract of level and fruitful ground.

ceive their insults. Our prospects were no longer the same as in former days. Isabella might still remain faithful to me ; but I might see her no more, as nothing but dangers awaited me. We were both too impressed with this idea, not to feel the moment of our parting the bitterest of our existence. The recollection alone is so painful, even now, when those troubles are over, that I can dwell on it no longer.

We now proceeded to the City of Valladolid, and on reaching our house, found it filled with French, stript to its last nail, and much of the interior destroyed ; and we were obliged to take shelter in the house of a friend, who had been so fortunate as to escape the general pillage. Here we remained some months, till ours was evacuated and made habitable.

How much did I now sigh for the independent sort of life we had been leading ! In the city the abhorred sight of invaders embittered every moment. My brother had the same feelings, and these were further irritated by the

vanity and bravadoes of the French officers billeted in our house, with whom we were always at daggers drawn.

As the University was still closed, I could not continue my studies; but I was not therefore idle. My brother and I applied ourselves again to the study of the English language; in which, after a little time, we made considerable progress, through the kind assistance of some of the English collegians, who had not yet quitted the English and Scotch colleges of Valladolid, for their own country. From this occupation, which has since proved so useful to me, I derived more than one benefit. The perusal of the many excellent and varied works with which the literature of this country abounds, not only enlarged my ideas and gave me correct notions upon different subjects, but allayed, by deeply engaging my attention, that constant irritation excited by the fresh insults, and acts of oppression, which our invaders were daily heaping upon us.

Unfortunately (for so I must consider it), my eldest sister, Marienne, was now blooming in all the loveliness of youth and beauty. This could not escape the too discerning eyes of the officers who lodged in our house ; and who imagined, that in a conquered country they had a right, not only to every thing possessed by the inhabitants, but also to their persons. That we might not be molested by them, we confined ourselves entirely to our own apartments, and avoided as much as possible appearing before them ; but notwithstanding all our precautions and retirement, they found means to break in upon it, and to intrude almost every instant, even into our chambers.

I ought to remark here, that in general there are in every house two suites of rooms, which are alternately inhabited and deserted in the seasons of winter and summer. About the beginning of October the large ones are shut up till the beginning of June, and the smaller ones opened. These have the brick or stone floors

covered with mats, made of sedge and bass-weed, dyed in a variety of colours, and which serve instead of carpets. As fire places are not common in the houses of Spain, we make use of a *brasero*,^a raised about half a foot from the ground by a circular wooden frame, placed in the middle of the room, and which contains the embers of the burnt wine-shoot, the fumes of which are not at all injurious to the health, like those of the charcoal made of brush-wood, which latter is used only by the poorer classes, who from habit feel no inconvenience from its choking smell. It is round these braseros that the people of the house and their visitors sit, resting their feet on the wooden frame; the men to talk politics, and the women scandal.

About the beginning of June, the large closed apartments are thrown open, and the small ones stript of their mats, and winter clothing. The balconies assume outwardly their white dress, or

^a A flat and open brass pan, about two feet in diameter.

curtains, which, soaked in water several times a day, not only keep the sun off, but refresh the air. The window-shutters are nearly closed from morning to sun-set, admitting just light enough for persons to see one another, and the floors are irrigated several times a-day to make the apartments cooler.

All these comforts, however, we were obliged to forego, as it often happened, that the billeted officers drove us from one part of the house to the other, just as they thought they were likely to be nearer to my sister's apartment. Those who dared not do it on their own authority, brought a polite note from the French governor, requesting my father to allow the officers, under the penalty of five hundred dollars in case of disobedience, to choose their own apartments in the house, to which we were obliged to submit. They would then choose for some of their bedrooms, those next to my sister's, which of course compelled the family to move to another part of the house ; but whither they would quickly

follow, and from thence back again, hunting us up and down the house as if it had not belonged to us. Not contented with this, they would bring all their friends, and make a sort of barrack of the house, while we were obliged to supply them with fuel, lights, and every little et cetera that they pretended to want.

At night, too, whilst we were in our apartments, enjoying a little peace with a few friends, the whole party of officers, who had dined with our lodgers (sometimes amounting to thirty), would enter, *sans ceremonie*, and, establishing themselves there as sovereign lords, order our servants to bring them the best wine from our cellars. The glass would then go briskly round, and these polite visitors would entertain us with the exploits they had performed against the *brigands*, as they were pleased to call our troops; telling us the number of those they had killed, hanged, and quartered; the churches and

houses they had robbed, and even the number of women they had violated ; enlivening the recital with some hundreds of *sacres, pestes, matins, &c.*

As I should never end were I to state all the petty insults, rudeness, unmannerly expressions, and gross conduct of the “*politest people on earth,*” (as they call themselves) I shall mention only a fact, which presents the French character, and the private conduct of the insolent individuals of that degraded nation, in a striking light. I am convinced that none but the light-headed, unfeeling, immoral French are capable of an act as disgraceful as it is mean.

General Dufreys was in the habit of coming to our house to dine with a superior officer, who was billeted there. In his various intrusions into our apartments, he had met with my sister Marienne, and fallen violently in love with her ; (of course I mean the love that such a man was

capable of feeling) ; but being unable to gain her heart, he endeavoured by every possible means, short of absolute force, to get possession of her person. But when he found himself unsuccessful in this attempt, he turned his views to an object more worthy of his passion—to a maid-servant of ours—whom he succeeded in debauching by dint of presents and promises. She was now raised to the honor of being his acknowledged mistress ; and he, on the departure of Maréchal Bessières, being made Governor of Valladolid, gave a grand ball in honor of himself, out of the pockets of the inhabitants, (as was usually the case), to which the principal town's-people were invited. Of course my mother and my sister Marienne were not forgotten ; but they both determined not to be present, and therefore sent an answer declining the honor. This was not admitted ; on the contrary, one of the General's aide-de-camps came in person to intimate his Excellency's displeasure, in case

they failed to attend. Notwithstanding this threat, they persisted in their first resolution. The hour of the ball arrived, and they had not made the slightest preparation for the dance. The music struck up, and the dancing commenced, yet still they were absent. The governor, who had given this ball chiefly for the purpose of mortifying my mother and sister, immediately perceived it, and sent an officer with a picquet of soldiers, with express orders not to return without them, in whatever dress they might be. The soldiers accordingly arrived at our house, and entering their room, took them away by force, and conducted them to the Consistorio, insensible to their supplications and tears. There his Excellency, the General, received them with taunting and gross abuse, and then led them to the principal end of the room, where my Lady Governess, lately our servant-maid, was sitting under a most magnificent canopy. To her Ladyship they were obliged to make

their obeisance; after which, my mother, with all her aristocratic feelings of blue-blood, was obliged to sit on her right hand, and Marienne on her left. This was not the only humiliation they received on that hateful night; for the servants who handed the refreshments round, being instructed how to act, every time they passed, asked her Ladyship—"Will your excellency take any refreshments?"—and then presenting some to the other ladies who were near, passed on without noticing my mother or sister. One would have thought that these degrading insults would have satisfied the mean, savage Frenchman; but no, Marienne must dance—nay, she must dance with him! Thus the poor girl was dragged about the room, like a doll, till he himself, tired of the sport, allowed his victims to withdraw! Early next day, he sent a note to my father, intimating that in consequence of his family having resisted his orders, he expected to receive five hundred dollars by

twelve o'clock, without which his house would be pillaged. The five hundred dollars were paid, and thus ended the dancing party.—So much for French politeness and French elegance of behaviour

CHAPTER XI.

Immortal Cæsar! lo, a God, a God
He cleaves the yielding skies!

DYER.

NAPOLEON was now at Chamartin issuing decrees, which under different circumstances, would doubtless, in a short time, have placed Spain on a footing of political liberty and civilization with France; but great men are also subject to err. Napoleon mistook the national character of the Spaniards. He judged of it by that of other nations. He thought that we too might be dazzled with his victories, which he announced in thundering proclamations, imagining that those parts of the Peninsula which still resisted, would, impelled by fear, come to

pour out at his feet that flattering homage, and those obsequious eulogies, of which the other European nations had been so prodigal. But he found that none came to make such submissions, unless absolutely compelled. The generals intimated to the alcaldes the inevitable disasters which would fall upon their villages if they neglected to present themselves and tender their obedience ; in consequence of which, a few deputations went to the imperial quarters, fully resolved to perform nothing whatever that they might be induced to promise under such circumstances.

On Napoleon's approaching Valladolid, the alcalde mayor,^a the corregidor, and some of the members of the municipality, went as far as Tordesillas to present to him the keys of the city, already occupied by twenty thousand of his troops.

On the day of his entry, the town bells were to be set ringing, and the French governor had

^a A Judge of the Peace.

been very busy in collecting a few paid ragamuffins to shout, "Long live Napoleon;" but the Emperor having made his appearance two hours before the time appointed, accompanied only by a few dragoons, the governor's preparations were, to his great disappointment, rendered useless.

Anxious to see the man whose fame filled the world, my brother and myself left home some hours before he was expected, with the intention of going as far as a village distant a league and a half from the town, where we hoped to see him better. As we passed along the streets, we observed a group or two of citizens, who, wrapped in their long cloaks, were standing at the corner of the streets through which Napoleon was to pass. A melancholy look and a dejected air were visible in their countenances. One could very clearly see a noble pride struggling against the sad necessity, which forced them to stifle the indignant feelings created by the sight of the invaders.

We had hardly reached the city gate, when by the great bustle among the soldiers posted along the bridge, and by their eager running to arms, we suspected the approach of some chief officer, and a moment afterwards saw a man dressed in a colonel's green uniform, mounted on a grey horse, pass rapidly on, preceded by two dragoons. As he rode along, all the soldiers presented arms, and by their whispers, we learned it was Napoleon.

Half an hour afterwards, a multitude of general officers, richly clothed, dazzled the sight of the beholders, by the glittering gold of their uniforms.

"No wonder they have such rich embroidered coats," said a peasant gravely, who was standing close to us, "when they have plundered all our Madonnas of their petticoats!"

Soon after, the whole town was inundated with troops, and not one Spaniard was to be seen about the streets.

In the course of the evening, the municipal,

judicial, and ecclesiastical deputations went to the Emperor's palace to make their obeisance. When they entered the room where Napoleon was, they saw him, with his arms folded across his breast, pacing hastily up and down the room, as if a good deal agitated. On hearing the deputation announced, he turned sharply round, and stood still in the same posture. The Corregidor of the city was the first who presented himself to kiss the Emperor's hand. He was a little man, very jovial, and not at all shy; but, upon this occasion, his joviality, as well as his boldness, had quite abandoned him. The reason was simply this.—Four Frenchmen had that day been assassinated in the town, one of them, indeed, in the convent opposite the very palace of Napoleon. Now, as the Corregidor had been only the day before as far as Tordesillas to assure his Imperial Majesty that proper precautions should be taken against disturbances, and as he was aware that these assassinations had reached the ears of the Emperor, he ap-

proached him with that fear, which, under such circumstances, it was almost impossible not to feel. Hesitating and trembling, he began his address, which the Emperor interrupted with a box on the ear, that laid the poor Corregidor prostrate at his feet. Napoleon then looking sternly down upon his cowering victim, thus addressed him :—

“ Did you not, Sir, but yesterday give me solemn assurances that none of my soldiers should be injured ?—And have not four of my own guards been this day assassinated ? ”

Then, drawing out his watch and placing it upon the table, he added—

“ If, in twelve hours from this time, the criminals are not delivered up to me, all the inhabitants shall be decimated and shot. ”

In vain the bishop and the other deputies endeavoured to appease the real or feigned wrath of Napoleon. He remained inflexible, and would not even grant them a few hours more to find out the criminals.

The consternation into which this threat threw every family was so great, that many attempted to fly from the city; but the sentinels had received orders not to permit any one to pass the gates. Near thirty thousand troops occupied the town. Some houses had thirty or forty soldiers, whom they were obliged to furnish with every thing they demanded. Every hour that passed without hearing any tidings of the men who had killed the four Frenchmen, was for us all as the confirmation of the sentence of our death.

The convent having been given up to be pillaged,^a some soldiers found concealed in one of the vaults, where the relics of some great

^a This convent was, perhaps, one of the richest in Valladolid. Among other costly relics, there was a brick of massive gold, of nearly one foot in length by an inch thick, which contained a thorn said to be from the crown which Christ wore on the cross. It was presented to Napoleon by one of his generals, and he received it; but taking out the thorn—"There," said he, "give that back to the monks; I keep the brick."

family were deposited, a monk, who confessed to have been himself the murderer of a Frenchman in that convent. This was the only one who had been discovered up to the tenth hour of the time granted by Napoleon ; of the rest, no traces could be found.

It was under these appalling circumstances, that a member of the municipality presented one of those rare and noble traits, which is of itself sufficient to immortalize the name of the city that could produce it. Moved at the distress of the whole city, he rose and addressed his colleagues, thus :

“ Gentlemen, take me before the Emperor ; it was I who with my own hands killed the three Frenchmen. It is but just I should suffer.”

This startled many ; but before they had time to clear up the matter, a man was brought in manacled by four Polish lancers. He had been taken in the act of scaling the city walls, and a large knife covered with blood had been

found upon him. On his examination, he confessed having killed two out of the remaining three. This communication was immediately sent to Napoleon, who still insisted on having the third criminal by the exact time he had mentioned, although but one hour only remained.

A curious accident, however, discovered the third criminal a few minutes before the expiration of the appointed time. There was in the town a respectable man, by trade a lace-maker, who had conceived such mortal hatred for the French, that he did not allow one day to pass without killing one or two of them. He was in the habit of leaving home every morning very early upon what he termed, "the French hunting." As all the city gates were guarded by French sentinels he scrambled over the walls of the town, and went to furnish himself with a gun, which he was in the habit of concealing in the suburbs.

This man had a wife, the well known Rosita,

remarkable for her beauty. The French Governor of the Province, General Kellerman, had become enamoured of her person, and had succeeded, by dint of gold and presents, in surprising the fidelity due to her husband. This, however, had remained a secret between them and a servant girl. Her husband, never suspecting her infidelity, confided to her his patriotic deeds. On the morning of the day that Napoleon entered Valladolid, the lace-maker had killed one Frenchman, and his wife, still anxious for her husband's safety, had advised him to leave the town, as it might be discovered. He followed her advice ; but had the imprudence to return very early the following morning, when the municipality were still making the strictest searches. On his returning home he was surprised not to find his wife any where. He enquired of the servant ; but her account was so confused, that his suspicions were raised. Unable to draw any thing from her, he became so violent, that the girl, frightened for her mistress, went to inform

her of her husband's return. Rosita, who at that moment was in the arms of her paramour, and who knew but too well that her ruin was certain were her husband to discover her adulterous connexion with his worst enemy, disclosed to the Governor his late assassination. He was arrested, and far from denying it, he boldly avowed his practice of hunting Frenchmen, and of killing at least one a day.

This timely discovery saved the inhabitants from the horrible fate which seemed to await them, and calmed their agitations and alarms. On Napoleon being informed of it, he said with an air of self-satisfaction—"I know very well, that nothing is impossible when I command." And then he ordered the men to be executed at eleven o'clock the same day. Rosita, however, impelled by one of those unaccountable movements to which women are sometimes subject, obtained admittance to the presence of Napoleon, and throwing herself at his feet, bathed in tears, prayed for the life of her husband. Napoleon,

unmoved at the sight, at first refused to listen to her ; but finally, promised to perform an act of mercy in favour of him of the three, who, being married, had the greatest number of children. It happened that the lace-maker was the only married man of the three, and had five children.

The time for execution being nearly arrived, Rosita flew to the Plaza Mayor, which she reached at the very moment when the executioner was tying the rope around her husband's neck. He was immediately reprieved ; but he, without deigning to look at his wife, left the city, to which, however, he was brought back shortly after to lose his head upon the same scaffold, having been taken by some dragoons in an engagement fought near Valladolid, between them and some guerrillas.

Thus terminated an affair which had nearly produced the most horrible consequences. Violent measures, however, far from intimidating the inhabitants, would but have sharpened their animosity against the French ; and, as it always

happens in a country where true patriotism prevails, would have driven the people to every act of desperation.

It was during Napoleon's residence at Valladolid, that he received the news of Austria's declaration of war. In three days and a half this extraordinary man was in Paris. He travelled on horse-back, except about two hours a day, that he rode in a carriage to take his day's rest. Parties of troops were posted along the roads from Valladolid to Bayonne, to prevent any attack being made on him by the many partisans that now began to fill the country.

As the great bodies of our troops had been gradually dispersed, the inhabitants, who, till then, had suffered with patience their misfortunes, daily expecting their deliverance after every battle, now began to seek for themselves individually the means of shaking off the yoke which oppressed them. Every province, every

town, every individual, felt more strongly each day the necessity of resisting the common enemy. Repeated experience had convinced us, that our great masses of troops were unfit to contend with the French in pitched battles ; we, therefore, had again recourse to that desultory warfare which had been so wisely recommended by the Junta of Seville, at the beginning of the war, and which had been carried on with so much success.

That part of Spain occupied by the invaders was soon filled with guerrillas, some of them regular soldiers from the broken armies, and others the inhabitants of the country itself. Men from the lowest origin became active and enterprising leaders. They had no military authority nor permanent troops ; but they were standards, round which the inhabitants of the country rallied and fought. News of any little advantage gained by these numerous parties was eagerly received by the people, and repeated

with exaggeration. Their success raised those hopes which the defeat of our armies had for a moment depressed.

In order the more effectually to rouse the Spanish nation to a defiance of the invaders, even amidst their triumphs, the Junta of Badajoz, and several others, issued energetic addresses, and gave orders for raising the greatest possible number of detached corps. The weapons specified to be used were only two; the musket, and the *cuchillo*^a, or side knife:—the musket for attacking the enemy's convoys by surprise,—and the *cuchillo* for a night attack in the streets.

At the beginning of the establishment of our partizans, Maréchal Soult and other Generals issued, by order of Napoleon, decrees, by which no quarter was to be granted to any Spaniard found with arms, who did not belong to the regular army. They were all to be treated as

^a A weapon, which during Napoleon's invasion was more fatal to the French than the roaring cannon.

rebels against legitimate authority, and devoted without mercy to fire and sword. Three of Mina's soldiers were executed in consequence of these decrees ; but on the following day twenty-one Frenchmen appeared hanging on the trees opposite Pamplona ; that chieftain giving intimation at the same time that for every one of his men who should be shot, he would hang seven Frenchmen. This was thought a mere bravado ; but he soon undeceived them ; for the Governor having ordered, the better to show his disregard of such threats, others whom he had in his hands to be executed, next day almost every tree at a distance from Pamplona presented an awful, but just example of retaliation. The conduct of Mina was followed up by every Guerrilla chief, and the Regency of Spain not only approved this, but ordered a severer retaliation. A few of those examples, however, soon excited a murmur of discontent throughout the whole of the French army ; and Napoleon was, therefore, obliged to decree, that

the rights of war were also to be granted to the Guerrillas.

I had now reached my seventeenth year, and Raymundo his eighteenth. Our desire of becoming Guerrilleros was increased daily by the base conduct of the French. Nothing was better calculated to carry our animosity to its height, than their horrible treatment of the unfortunate Spanish prisoners. After the battle of Ocaña, the French, in order to throw the odium of such sanguinary measures upon the German troops, intrusted the prisoners to their care, with the express order to shoot all those who could march no further. Hundreds of these poor wretches were shot without mercy; many sunk under fatigue, while others died of inanition, being absolutely starved. The ferocity of these German troops was of itself so great, that it was quite unnecessary to recommend to them a vigilant cruelty.

I myself saw four prisoners killed in the streets of Valladolid, as they passed on their way

to France. The inhabitants of the town had assembled in great numbers in the streets to distract the attention of the soldiers who escorted them, and had taken care to leave their doors open, that the prisoners, mingling in the crowd as they passed, might run into the houses, the doors of which readily shut to save them.

One of the prisoners, a native of Valladolid, had succeeded in mingling with the crowd unobserved by any of his escort, and was on the point of entering his own house, where his mother was anxiously expecting him, her arms extended ready to close him to her bosom, when a *gens-d'arme*, who noticed the circumstance, made a sign to one of the escort, who, immediately firing, shot him dead at the threshold !

These sanguinary proceedings against disarmed enemies, whose very weakness should have protected them, excited so strong a feeling among all classes, that many peaceable citizens left their homes that very day to join the patriots. As for my brother Raymundo, and myself, we

determined at once to run away from home, if our father did not give us leave to join the Spanish army. Such a rash step, however, was unnecessary, as my father secretly approved our wish, though the dangers to which our youth and inexperience exposed us would have led him to defer it a little longer. But the fear of more serious consequences from our perpetual quarrelling with the French officers, who were inmates of our house, added to our earnest entreaties, induced him to consent to our departure.

As soon as the necessary preparations were made, we took leave of our disconsolate family. My good father's last address made so deep an impression on me, that its sounds seem still to vibrate on my ear.

“My children,” said he, with that dignified resignation which so peculiarly distinguished him, “you know how I have lived; you know the veneration that our fellow-citizens have for my character: may I, then, in the disconsolate

situation in which you leave us, comfort myself with the hope that you will always behave like my sons, and keep untarnished that honourable reputation, which, during my whole life, it has been the only object of my endeavours to raise and maintain?—Will you remember, in the hour of danger, that the honour of my name is at stake?—that life without honour is not worth possessing?—Can I flatter myself that you will not only be brave, but prudent; not only firm where it is necessary, but generous and humane?”

Here he paused, and our tears replied to him.

“If you promise this,” added he, “go, my children, though it be to death: if you fall with honour, I shall die contented.”

Then stretching out his withered hand,—we kissed it, received his blessing, and departed.

CHAPTER XII.

Thy spirit, Independence, let me share !
Lord of the lion-heart, and eagle-eye,
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky.

SMOLLETT.

WE effected our departure in the dusk of evening, unaccompanied by any one, and over the walls of the town ; as otherwise we might have been stopped, and thus have compromised the safety of our family ;—the French having issued a severe decree, by which fathers, and those suspected in aiding the escape of their children or friends, were to be carried as prisoners to France. Many, however, met a worse fate.

We had hardly proceeded a league from the city, when we saw four men riding briskly towards us. The moon shone brightly, and we could distinguish their dress very clearly. By the glittering of their helmets, and their long white cloaks, they appeared to us to be French dragoons ; though, on the other hand, it was not likely that only four dragoons should be wandering at so late an hour in so unfrequented a spot, and so far from the city.

When within about pistol shot, they halted, and surprising us with a "*Qui vive ?*" to which we nevertheless replied, "Spain," they all fired and came galloping up to us ; but on their approach, we found to our joy that they themselves were Spaniards. They had mistaken us for two custom-house officers, who were in the habit of visiting those places to prevent the smuggling of wine into the town, but whom they wished to punish for acting as French spies.

Overjoyed at our escape, we proceeded on our

journey in company with one of them, who served us also as a guide and a safeguard to Tudela de Duero, the village where our horses and arms were in waiting for us.

It was midnight when we reached it. We went straight to the house of the curate, our relation, who had got ready all our equipments, consisting of one horse each, a carabine, a couple of pistols, a broad sword, and a side knife. Our uniform was a simple green coat, with red facings ; a long pair of green trowsers, with a red stripe on the side, and a cocked hat, with a red cockade, in the middle of which was a portrait of Ferdinand, surrounded with several red ribbons, having various inscriptions, such as "*Vencer o Morir,*" "*Patria, Religion, y Rey,*" &c.

Early the next day we took leave of the curate, who, crying like a child, embraced us tenderly. We left the village, (accompanied by two young peasants, also mounted on horses, who were to act as our aides-de-camp), amidst

the loud shouts and blessings of the inhabitants, who had known us ever since our infancy.

Not even the hero of La Mancha could feel more proud or gratified when he sallied forth, armed from head to foot in quest of adventures, than we did on that glorious day, which was to make an epoch in the history of our lives ; nor do I think that, even in idea, that sun of knight-errantry could have ever formed such extravagant resolutions as we did, when, mounted on our steeds we proceeded along the banks of the Duero to join the regular army, which at that period was said to be near Ciudad Rodrigo.

As the French occupied the whole of Old Castille, and kept garrisons in almost every important town, but more particularly in all those situated along the roads, we were obliged to avoid them as much as possible. The spirit of the people, however, was every where so favorable to the cause of their country, that, notwithstanding this occupation, we met with no very serious impediments. I have not heard of a

single instance, in the course of the whole war, in which an armed Spaniard was betrayed to the French by false information from the peasants.

This is so fine a trait in the character of my countrymen, that it can never be too highly praised. Neither promises nor threats could induce the high-minded Castillian to betray the interests of his country. Nothing was more welcome to him than the sight of one of his fellow countrymen armed with a gun or a pike in search of Frenchmen. He considered it as one of the most sacred of his duties to inform him where he might find one or more of them, the place where he might hide himself, and take his aim deliberately and without risk, the path which he was to follow in case of being closely pursued, the time most favourable to ensure success; in a word, to give every information which was likely to bring destruction on the enemy's head, and ensure safety to his countrymen. How often at the greatest peril of their own lives, have they saved those of the Guerrillas by hiding them in

their houses ! How many peasants have I seen contemplate from a distance, with that stoic calmness and contempt for their destroyers, so peculiarly characteristic of the peasantry of Castille, the flames rushing out from the roofs of their dwellings, for having given an asylum to their fugitive brethren ! And how often did they deprive themselves of the only loaf of bread remaining in the house to feed the brave defender of his country, and bestow their last *real* with that cheerful eagerness which others manifest at giving their money for a good bargain !

The evils upon which other nations look tamely as the inevitable consequences of war, and to which they submit, only furnished the Spanish people with new motives of hatred and irritation. Undaunted by the cruelty of their enemies, they exerted every nerve to take a proper revenge, and employed by turns the greatest energy, or the greatest dissimulation.

Frequently the peasant obtained from his bil-

letted soldier information of whither he and his comrades were marching, and then taking his tools as if going to work in the fields, would assemble some of his friends, and lie in ambush on the roads, or wait in difficult passes, to snatch from the French those very articles and provisions which they had procured by plunder.

At other times the peasants invited the soldier to go and drink wine with them, and, while the guest was in the act of lifting up the jug to his lips, would strike him a blow on the head, and plunge a knife in his breast.

Thus were the French obliged to struggle for ever against difficulties not military or foreseen, such as are met in regular warfare; but against those numberless obstacles which sprung from that hatred and desperation which had become national and universal, and to which the atrocious acts of the French had driven the Spanish people;—and thus it was, that, though the French, during the six years the war lasted, had gained ten pitched battles, and taken almost

every strong place, they had not secured the durable possession of a single district of a province. Whilst the French armies reached as far as Gibraltar, the Spanish Guerrillas were making incursions into the heart of France, and raising contributions at the very gates of Toulouse.

But to return to myself,—in all those towns or villages through which we passed, and which happened to be inhabited, we were warmly greeted, and hospitably regaled and entertained. Our youth and enthusiasm in the cause of independence interested both women and men ; from the former we received all sorts of kind attentions, and from the latter, encouragement and advice. Nothing could be more gratifying to us than such a journey. We were delighted to observe the uniformity of sentiment that pervaded the whole population, and no less gratified at the independent life we led.

The blasting hand of war, however, and the solitude and desolation with which conquering armies stamp their progress, frequently drove

from our minds every pleasing idea. In passing through the deserted villages, nothing was heard but the echo of our horses' foot-steps, repeated by the silent walls of the empty houses, and the croaking of ravens hovering round the turrets of ruined castles, and lofty belfries. Now and then the force of the wind would cause the clapper of the bell to give a solitary sound, and thus add a sort of spell to the dreary silence that reigned around.

The doors of most of the houses were wide open, and upon a nearer examination we discovered a new method which the French had adopted for forcing open such doors as resisted the hatchet, or stone,—that of firing into the key-holes.

The inhabitants, before betaking themselves to flight, frequently walled up all that they could not carry with them; but this always proved a useless precaution, the French being in the habit of measuring, like architects, the outer dimensions of the empty houses, and then

the inner apartments, to discover if any space had been taken from them.

One afternoon, rather late, as Raymundo and myself were sitting by ourselves in one of these deserted houses, in which we had taken shelter for the night, (our servants having gone to a neighbouring field in search of forage for our horses,) we heard a deep moan in an adjoining room. It startled us, and we both rose involuntarily. Presently a plaintive voice, like that of a female, again struck upon our ears.

We immediately proceeded towards the room from which the voice seemed to issue, when at the same instant both our servants rushed in, announcing the rapid approach of a detachment of French cavalry. We had only time to mount our horses, and set off at full gallop in an opposite direction from that in which the French were coming, unable to ascertain whose the voice was that we had heard. Notwithstanding all our speed, the French perceived our flight, and seven or eight of them came in pursuit of us,

Fortunately, however, we knew every inch of the country, and therefore directing our horses to a wood at no great distance, concealed to the eye by a steep hill, entered it before they could come up with us. Here we followed an intricate path, that led to a small hermitage in the centre of the wood, where we remained half an hour; after which time we sallied out by the same path, with the intention of returning to the house we had before left. We reached it shortly after, and went directly to the room whence the cries had proceeded. Here we saw a woman, of about thirty years of age, stretched lifeless on some straw. We touched and examined her, and found that she was really dead. From her dress and appearance, she seemed to be one of those French women who followed the army. Our servants found about her person a rich necklace and some gold, which they brought away, as they said, for a keep-sake.

CHAPTER XIII.

Guerra sin tregua, serbidumbre, muerte,
Este es nuestro deber. Las alianzas,
La amistad de un contrario es un oprobio.
O yo parezca, o mi enemigo caiga.

CIENFUEGOS, CONDESA DE CASTILLA, SCENE I.

HAVING that same evening returned to the hermitage to pass the night there, next day we proceeded on our journey. As we went along the roads we could see at a distance troops of peasants retiring behind the heights, or among the thickets. Often we perceived nothing but their heads raised from time to time above those parapets, as if uncertain of what we were. The privations which these poor people endured by the continuance of the war, drove to acts of desperation against their invaders even those

who had retired to the woods in hopes of living in peace.

Not far from Medina del Campo, we were introduced to the celebrated capuchin friar, who may claim the glory of having first formed a respectable Guerrilla party in the Peninsula.

It was night when we reached the house where he was. The sound of our horses' feet drew towards us two mounted men, who after their "*Quien vive?*" and our answer "*España,*" allowed us to approach. We entered a large court in which there blazed four or five fires, around which were seated a number of men dressed in all sorts of colours. These dresses were the spoils of Frenchmen they had killed. Some of the men wore a dragoon's coat, with their own common breeches and spatterdashes; others a pair of hussar's embroidered pantaloons, and their own country jackets. There was one who attracted particular notice for having a fine embroidered coat of a tambour-major, and a dragoon's helmet. It was impossible to

look without a smile at the odd mixture, on the same men, of the various uniforms of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, (of which the French had such a variety,) extravagantly jumbled together with their own country dress.

They had just returned from an expedition against a small convoy in which they had been successful, having brought back with them all the good things of a French *vivandier*,^a which they were now enjoying. Some were smoking cigars, and had by them *jarros*^b of wine, others were occupied in roasting and frying sausages and fowls; while others were eating their *sopas de ajo*.^c Never had many of them enjoyed a better supper in all their lives.

As we entered, many rose and came with countenances expressive of strong curiosity, demanding the news, and whether there were more Frenchmen near enough to attack. We gratified their curiosity as much as it was in our

^a Sattler.

^b Jugs.

^c Garlic Soup.

power, and were afterwards introduced into the kitchen. There we saw the father Capuchin seated in the only chair there was in the room, and many of his état-major very unceremoniously lying on the ground. The host, hostess and various peasants were sitting on a bench. In the middle of the kitchen stood a table, on which were seen the remains of a supper, to all appearance furnished, like that of the men, by the French sutler.

The father was dressed in the habit of his order, and wore a long beard. He was a man of about forty years of age, had a very animated countenance, and was tall, well formed, and of a commanding aspect. Beside his rosary of beads, that hung from a girdle, he had a brace of pistols, and a long knife.

As we entered, he welcomed us, and presented his hand for us to kiss, without rising from his chair. He put several questions to us and seemed well satisfied with our answers. In

the course of our conversation, we related to him the little adventure which happened to us the first night of our journey, and he laughed at the mistake. He said that if we remained some days with him, we should see good fighting; for he had among his party, men, whose bravery would not yield even before a whole army of *Gabachos*. He related to us the manner in which he had once been taken prisoner by the French; how without the interference of General Sebastiani, the life of whose aide-de-camp he had spared, he should have been hung; and, lastly, how on his way to France he made his escape near Burgos, with other interesting particulars of his life and exploits.

While we were all conversing in a very familiar manner, a young peasant was introduced, and delivered to him a written message. After reading it to himself, he got up, and seizing his sabre—

“My lads,” said he to those who were then

in the room, "go and get your horses ready; for we must instantly depart towards the road of Avila to intercept a small detachment of French troops."

They all jumped up, and left the kitchen. Then addressing himself to us, he said,

"I'll take you with me, if you promise to behave with gallantry, and like true Castilians."

We replied eagerly, "that he should have no cause of complaint against us; for that we would never disgrace the honor of his troop by any unmanly act."

"*Vencer ó Morir*," added my brother, "is our motto, and we hope to prove ourselves not unworthy of it."

"Well, my sons," cried he, "then let us go."

We now came into the court, where all the men who happened to be present were drawn up in two lines. There might be about thirty cavalry, and sixty infantry. After mounting,

the father made a short speech to his men, recommending them to behave with their usual bravery, as in the event of any falling gloriously he might be certain of going to heaven. Then placing himself at their head, he ordered them to follow him. As for my brother and myself, he placed us near him, one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

The night was so dark, that we could scarcely see our way, and the silence so great that had it not been for the treading of feet, no one could have suspected that near a hundred men were travelling together,—not even a whisper was heard.

After several hours march, we came to a thick wood near a road, where the father Capuchin halted his men, desiring them to be on the alert, for in half an hour the enemy would appear. This was between two and three in the morning. The moon was just emerging from the horizon, but so involved in clouds that she hardly diffused any light. A man came

now running towards us, and announced the approach of the enemy about forty strong, all cavalry, and having with them a carriage. The father ordered his foot soldiers to concentrate themselves about the middle of the wood, and divided his horsemen into two parties; one he ordered to post themselves at two hundred paces distance on one side of the infantry, and the other about the same distance on the opposite side, recommending them to remain quiet until the infantry should have fired the first volley, then to rush out on each side, fire their carbines and sabre as many as they could.

At length the French dragoons advanced within a short musket-shot, and the word *fuego* was given. The men fired, and our cavalry rushed out, discharging also their pieces. We all advanced towards the road. I endeavoured to keep as close as possible to the father Capuchin. I saw a great number of the French and some horses stretched on the ground, and an officer getting out of the carriage. Some of

our men seized and secured him. I, observing some of the dragoons flying, spurred my horse towards them; but before I could overtake them, some of our men had cut them down, and I now returned to the spot where our commander was.

Here I had the pleasure of seeing safe in our hands the handsome aide-de-camp of General Kellerman, Monsieur Turenne, whose fine, long, and twisted mustachios had helped to make so many conquests among the fair ones of my native town. He was a descendant of the noble and celebrated family of Turenne, and in point of bravery equal to the great Turenne himself. He was the bearer of some important despatches from the governor of Valladolid to some other general, when he fell into our hands.

Some of our men wanted to dispatch him, but the father Capuchin interfered, and directed that he should be treated well. One of them, however, could not resist snatching from him his

gold epaulette, nor another his handsome cap; a third thought his boots too good for a prisoner, and a fourth exchanged a rough jacket for his beautiful coat. This little spoliation excepted, he met in other respects with very good treatment.

In this affair, six or seven dragoons only escaped; the rest, finding their retreat cut off, perished defending themselves vigorously. Our loss consisted of only two men and three horses killed, and four or five men slightly wounded. We took about twenty horses.

We then returned to the place from whence we had started, and, being naturally in want of repose, each stretched his cloak on the ground, and went to sleep. About the middle of the day I awoke, and with my brother sat down with the father Capuchin to dinner. Monsieur Turenne was also his guest; but being a little dejected, Raymundo and myself endeavoured to raise his spirits by drinking the health of some ladies with whom we knew him to be acquainted.

“ It appears to me,” said he, “ that I have frequently seen those two youthful countenances, though I cannot remember where.”

“ Don’t you recollect,” said I, “ a domiciliary visit that you paid in Valladolid to Don Ignacio Lara, at a most inconvenient hour in the morning, and while all the family were still in bed, to ascertain whether his house was good enough for General Sebastiani to lodge in ?”

“ Yes,” replied Turenne fixing his eyes on mine.

“ And don’t you recollect two youths, who rushed out from a room in their night clothes to entreat of you not to penetrate any farther, as their sisters were sleeping in the next room ; with which entreaties you were kind enough to comply ?”

“ Yes,” said Turenne again. “ Are you, then, that gentleman’s two sons, who have lately been missing from the city ?”

“ Precisely so,” cried I.

“ I cannot compliment you upon your taste,”

returned Turenne, "though I cannot help admiring that patriotic feeling which urges you to abandon all the comforts of such a home, for such a life as this."

"Why!" exclaimed my brother, "to tell you the truth, the happiest day of our lives was that on which we left the home you speak of. We had there too much of your countrymen's company, who, you will allow, are not all as polite as yourself; besides, I presume that the perpetual sight of the authors of one's country's ruin, is not so engaging as to make a man forgetful of all his duties towards that country. For my part," added he, "I can assure you, that until I see your eagles recede to their native mountains, I shall never enter the threshold of my home, unless, indeed, I am carried thither a corpse."

"For my part," cried I, unsheathing my sword, and kissing its blade, "I vow by this steel, sacred to my country, sooner to feel its edge in my own heart, than re-enter that home

while a single invader treads on my native land."

Turenne bent his head down in silence ; but changing our conversation, we reminded him of the elegant dances so frequently given by his General. We allowed, that that was the way to keep the fair part of the community in good humour ; but we doubted whether the fathers and husbands of the ladies who waltzed with the dashing strangers around the saloons, were equally pleased. Another thing which we also doubted, was the pleasure experienced next day by the fathers and husbands, when messengers from the General came round to collect what was termed *dance-money*. The General's politeness in sending a whole battalion to be well boarded and lodged in the house of the citizen who refused to pay for the pleasure which the French officers had enjoyed the night before, was also a matter of doubt with us. We also thought that a better method of persuasion might have been adopted, than sending a party

of soldiers with orders to bring away the ladies to the ball-room, as the Romans carried off the Sabine women.

Monsieur Turenne agreed with us in all these points, but very justly observed, that, had the French waited patiently, until the people of the towns came forward of their own accord, they would probably have not danced much in Spain.

Monsieur Turenne was a man of quick parts, and to the politeness of his ancestors joined some information. He was glad to see in us something above our fellow warriors, and often endeavoured to convert us to his faith. He agreed that the Spaniards were right in fighting for their independence, but thought it was in sacrifice of their political liberty. “You,” said he to us, “who have more enlarged notions of national honor and liberty, why have you taken up arms against a king who brings you all the blessings you desire? Has he not declared that there will be an equality among you all?—that

the nation will no longer be composed of masters and slaves—of victims and oppressors? Why rebel thus against reason, honor, and humanity?”

“ Blessings,” replied I, “when imposed upon us by fire and sword, can no longer be considered as such, but rather as acts of tyranny, which an independent mind must spurn. The Arabs, those tribes of barbarians who overran our country, and who became civilized only when settled under our skies, made use of precisely the same arguments as your Napoleon does now.—‘ We come to liberate you from a race of degraded rulers, who do not merit your confidence or esteem: they are tyrants—we are liberators: with them you are only slaves—with us you will be freemen.’—Such was their language; but look at their deeds:—plunder, fire, violation, and assassination marked their steps wherever they were directed.—You say, that you are our allies, and yet you have surprised our citadels, pillaged our temples, abused our women, thrown

the country into a gulph of calamities, and, what is still worse in the eyes of the majority, insulted every Spaniard in the person of his king. History does not yet offer an instance of a nation made happy by the steel of a foreign power. We see republican Rome extend her conquests, not to give freedom to the world, but rather to enslave it, and enrich herself with its spoils. Are you ignorant that power is always the great ally of despotism? and that unfortunately for the human race it is a principle of our nature to despise those whom we have conquered, and to look upon ourselves as superiors? The abuse of power closely follows the possession of it. Napoleon would constantly be calling upon us to contribute with our blood and wealth to his mad projects of ambition. We must be sacrificed to France. We see, even now, when we are very far from being conquered, most extraordinary decrees, dividing the kingdom into military governments, and placing our provinces under the rod of French generals, and subjecting our citi-

zens to military authorities. Joseph himself is treated by his brother as a conquered king, and Spain as a conquered kingdom. He has himself been the dupe of his brother's policy, which consisted only in deceiving a great nation by pompous promises of liberty and independence. Now that the Emperor thinks the whole of Spain is bending at his feet, he proposes that the barrier of the Ebro shall be substituted for that of the Pyrenees, doubtless to teach Joseph how to descend from his throne whenever *he* shall wish it. I am so convinced that our rights can never be secured without the complete independence of our country, that I myself would preach to the people to repel your bands as those of despotism, and cry till their last breath, '*Guerra al cuchillo.*'"^a

"Poor Spaniards !" exclaimed Turenne, with a shrug of the shoulders, "how I pity you, then."^b

^a War to the knife.

^b Monsieur Turenne was wrong in principle, though

“ But, gentlemen,” cried Raymundo, “ though unfortunately our existence is at this moment wholly political, must we exclude, even from our reflections, that fair portion of human nature, which makes our delight, and without whose affections, life is but a blank ? Let me ask Monsieur Turenne, what kind of sensation he felt at the approach of a handsome Spanish lady, Doña Cesarita R ———s, for instance ? ”

Turenne smiled at the allusion. “ The sensation,” replied he, “ which I experience at the approach of a Spanish lady, has something so bewitching, that it baffles description. She is more open, and less restrained in her coquetry,

subsequent events prove him to have been right in practice. Spain was the principal agent in bringing about the temporary independence of Europe : and Spain has not only enslaved herself, but all the other continental nations too. By conquering Napoleon, we dethroned the man of the people, and placed in his stead divine right and legitimacy. Would to God we had failed in our attempt ! Spain would not now be the prey of civil dissensions, and of the darkest ignorance and misrule.

than a French woman. She cares little about the blame of the world, provided she feels satisfied with the object of her choice. She is not insensible to its approbation, but she does not court it. She disdains affectation, though she neglects nothing which is likely to carry her point. From being under the influence of a burning sun, she never borrows from art a colour that nature has denied to her. But with how many charms is she not endowed as a compensation for her paleness ! Where can you find such a fine shape as hers ? such graceful movements ? such delicacy of features ? and such elegance of carriage ? Grave, and sometimes at first sight even a little melancholy,—when she casts upon you her large black eyes, full of expression, and when she accompanies them with a tender smile, insensibility itself must fall at her feet. She is as seductive when she permits you to hope, as she is mortifying in her disdain, but she is very *exigeante* in her affection. Love with her is a rigorous duty, and,

even when crowned with success, it requires that you belong to her alone. You must sacrifice to her all your affections—all your desires—all your time. You must be ready to prove your devotion every hour of the day!—to accompany her to the promenade, the theatre, the tertulia, and even the confessional. Jealousy rages in her bosom; the slightest incident produces alarm; and a transient wavering is punished like infidelity. To be brief—the bonds of a handsome Spanish woman are less pleasant to support than difficult to avoid. Their lively imaginations subject them to fits of humour and caprice, but their constancy is not in the least shaken on that account; and the fascination they both occasion and experience, is often prolonged much beyond the ordinary time. To which I must add, that the national costume, so simple, and I would almost say, so *sincere*, gives to the Spanish women a charm which is no where else to be met with. That shape, which no foreign ornament hides from the

view; that uncovered head, which at most a lace veil only shades; those dresses fitting to the form, and which unite in one appearance the highest and middle rank of society; and those pretty little feet, with elegant shoes: all these are also principal points that distinguish the Spanish women from those of other countries, and that captivate our admiration."

"*Touchez la,*" cried Raymundo, stretching out his hand—"You are my man. I love those who, like you, can feel and describe the charms of those lovely creatures, who, though they may now and then cause us a few moments of torment, have, nevertheless, the supernatural art of sweetening the very tears they make us shed, and of rendering delightful the worst moments of our existence."

In this sort of conversation we spent most of the time passed in his company, while remaining with the father Capuchin. We afterwards learned, that Turenne had been sent back on his parole not to serve again against Spain; and

it is with some concern for the ladies that I am obliged to add, that in consequence of our jokes about his mustachios, the soldiers of the Capuchin did not allow him to depart without first singeing them; thus inhumanly destroying in an instant the work of several years' care and attention!

CHAPTER XIV.

—Life is hazard at the best—and here
No more remains to win, and much to fear.

Bride of Abydos.

How carols now the lusty muleteer?
Of love, romance, devotion is his lay?
As whilome he was wont the leagues to cheer,
His quick bells wildly jingling on the way?
No! as he speeds he chaunts, "Viva el Rey!"

Childe Harold.

As we generally kept within the distance of thirty or forty miles from Valladolid, we contrived to inform our family of our operations, and frequently received news from them. But my father, well aware that the dangers of a Guerilla's life were far more numerous, and greater than those of a soldier in a regular army, had sent instructions to a cousin of ours, who was at Cadiz, to procure us commissions from the

Regency to serve with La Romana, or with Ballesteros. He did what he could to obtain them for us in the same division; but was not altogether successful in his endeavours; Raymundo being appointed to serve under Ballesteros, who at that time was near Cadiz, and I under Count Montijo, who was then engaged in the Guerrilla warfare on the confines of Old Castile, Aragon, and Navarre.

We were still with the father Capuchin when our commissions reached us. This separation was the most painful act of obedience our country had yet required; but it was absolutely necessary, and we prepared to make it without delay. "Esteban," said Raymundo, "we must part now.—Our country requires this sacrifice—it is a painful one; but we must submit. The proud day when Spain may see herself free from the vile race that pollutes her soil, may not be far, and then we shall meet again with double pleasure. Adieu, then," added he, throwing his arms round my neck—"Adieu!"

We took our final leave of each other—mounted our horses—and each bent his course towards the place of his destination.

I proceeded in my journey, accompanied only by a servant; deploring the sad necessity that forced me to part from my brother. Yet the new situation in which I found myself had many charms for me. I was glad to be thus launched into the wide ocean of life, and proud of holding a rank among the defenders of my country; and had it not been for the idea of being separated from every member of my family and from my Isabella, nothing could have lessened the pleasure I felt at the free and active life I was now leading.

The country through which we passed was vast and deserted; scarcely a traveller to be met with. Nothing was to be seen but now and then at a distance a French convoy of ammunition, or an escort: here and there, too, a small French out-post, or a sentry at the top of some old tower, watching for new dangers and

troubles. Our usual lodging was among the ruins of deserted villages, the doors of whose dwellings had been carried off by the French to their encampments for fire-wood.

On reaching the Somo-sierra mountains, Buytrago appeared to our right on the side of one of them ; its old walls and gothic battlements brought to my mind those days of glory when Rodrigo de Vivar, with his bold Castilians, disputed our soil with the invading Saracen. At the foot of those ancient fortifications, and among cliffs, rushes a little torrent, near the borders of which I paused to let my horse refresh himself in its cool waters. Meanwhile I listened to its noisy sounds, and almost fancied I could hear the clash of two armies meeting in combat, and see Vivar, mounted on his Babieca, cut his way through hundreds of Moors, while, his white plumage waving in the air, he beckoned to his companions to follow him—they rush forward!—lo! in a moment the invading hosts are cast down those precipices, and the conquering

Castilians shout for victory ! I had almost joined them in their cry, when a shot and a whiz awoke me from my reverie. On lifting up my eyes I saw some French soldiers on the top of the walls, making preparations to salute me more effectually ; but, avoiding their intention by leading my horse along a covered path, I proceeded more soberly on my way.

Next day we came to a small cottage situated at the foot of one of these same mountains, the host of which, a venerable old man, assured me he had not yet seen one of the invaders. This I considered most happy for him ; for he was living there alone, excepting an only daughter, much too young and beautiful to have escaped unnoticed by the French. She showed me so many kind attentions with so much enchanting simplicity, that I was induced to stay there and take the rest our horses required.

On the following morning I went with her to the mountains to kill game ; which was a favourite sport of hers. In the course of our ramble,

a wolf crossed our path, and, setting my heart on killing it, I quitted the young votaress of Diana, promising a speedy return, and followed the animal through several narrow defiles and precipices till I entirely lost my way, and night overtook me. Misled by the effects of the darkness, at every step I fancied myself on the brink of some precipice, and could only continue my march by groping between the rocks. At last I saw some fires blazing at a distance, and directed my steps towards them; but before I could reach them, they were totally extinguished.

Wearied with fatigue, and unable to proceed any further, I sat myself down, endeavouring to sleep; but from time to time, I was startled at fancied or real noises. The idea of wolves, of which there are great numbers in these Sierras, probably on account of being the places where the merinos graze a great part of the year, kept me in constant alarm, and the noise of reptiles crawling near me added to the unpleasantness of my situation. At last the moon rose, a little be-

fore day-break. Never in my life had I felt a greater pleasure at the silvery light which it diffused. I immediately recovered all my vigour, and set off for a village which I could now see at the bottom of a deep ravine, after having marched upwards of sixteen hours without taking any food.

My troubles, however, were not all over ; for I had to turn the mountain in order to come back to my cottage, and on going up a steep hill, I saw at a distance what at first sight appeared a cloud of dust, but which soon turned out to be four or five hundred French troops, advancing at a quick pace towards a village in the valley. As soon as they perceived me, they sent several chasseurs in different directions. Whichever road I took, there was scarcely a possibility of escape ; but while I was still hesitating, I heard a noise near as if some one were gaining on me, which obliged me immediately to leap into a cave that I saw before me. By the fall, which nearly stunned me, though I fell among brambles, I perceived it must be very

deep. Here, however, I remained a couple of hours without making any endeavours to come out; and when I began to attempt it, I saw it was utterly impossible, as the sides of the cave were as smooth and perpendicular as the walls of a house. I tried, but in vain, every way my ingenuity could suggest, for several hours together. In this emergency, I hallooed from time to time, but nobody appeared. Night came on, and I was still in my cave.

Exhausted with fatigue, I sunk down and slept for some hours, after which I again made some desperate attempts to get out, though equally unsuccessful as those of the previous day. I then had recourse to hallooing, when at length I thought I heard some voices, which became more audible as mine grew weaker, my strength beginning to fail me, and presently, what was my surprise on seeing at the mouth of the cave six or seven French voltigeurs, who, on perceiving me, burst out into loud peals of laughter, exclaiming—"We have caught the

fox at last—here he is, by heavens !” Upon this discovery they passed a thousand jokes, but at last determined to extricate me, in order, as they said, “ to see what breed I belonged to.”

I was inclined to disappoint their curiosity by not tying round my waist the object they threw down to me for that purpose, which consisted of a sword belt tied to their cloaks ; but one of them pointing his musket to my head, “ Buckle that belt,” said he, “ or *ventre bleu*, I’ll kill you like the hare in its form !” There was no answering such a persuasive argument, therefore I buckled it, and was taken out without much difficulty, and afterwards conducted to the village below, to be introduced to their Colonel, who, they said, would be happy to make my acquaintance.

As it was at the curate’s house, where, from its being the best in the village, all the French chiefs usually took up their quarters, we went straight there, and found the Colonel pacing the room ; and also, seated on an arm chair, a gen-

tleman whom I immediately knew to be a Spaniard, notwithstanding his fine foreign embroidered uniform. He was interrogating a priest, who stood up like a school-boy receiving a reprimand, with his large hat in one hand, in the other a good sized breviary, and his eyes rivetted to the ground.

As soon as I entered, the man of embroidery, in a haughty tone, bid him withdraw, but be careful what men he admitted again into his house, as his shaven crown might be no protection against a few ounces of lead. Then listening to the account that the voltigeurs gave of me, he lowered his frowning brow, and bid me stand before him. He then enquired my employment, destination, place of nativity, name, and parents. No sooner had I pronounced my name, and my father's, than starting up,—“What !” exclaimed he, “Esteban ! the son of Don Ignacio Lara ?—Colonel !” said he, turning himself to the Frenchman, “his father is one of the worst insurgents that Spain con-

tains, and you may well imagine that the son is no better. The fewer we have of this accursed race the better. There will be nothing safe till they are all exterminated. Let him be shot immediately. I will take the responsibility on myself."

I was no less surprised than alarmed at this discourse, and gave myself up for lost ; but the Colonel objected to this summary proceeding, and moreover declared it was his duty to endeavour to gain as much information from me as possible, and that the state of exhaustion in which I seemed, required a few hours' rest,—“after that,” added he, “he shall suffer the punishment he deserves.”

I was accordingly taken to a bed, and by the treatment I received, recovered my strength very soon. The manner of their treating me was curious, but very effective : first I was made to swallow a good draught of pure brandy ; then wrapt up in a sheet that had been soaked in the liquor also, I was left to my repose. Two

hours afterwards I felt quite invigorated, and by no means disinclined to the chop that was presented to me, and to the glass of excellent old wine that accompanied it. Soon after this, the servant of Monsieur le Colonel brought me a cup of coffee, which, he said, his master had sent. I could not reconcile these little attentions with the fate that seemed to be preparing for me; but while I was in this suspense the Colonel entered the room, and addressed me in the following extraordinary manner; —“You are now at liberty to go. I have given secret orders to the sentinels to let you pass unmolested. I wish to save your life; because no Frenchman is born an assassin, and because I perceive that the worthless man I escort urges your death from some private motive of revenge, which no soldier ought ever to gratify.”

No words can express the feelings of gratitude, surprise, and admiration that this noble action excited in me. I had nothing left about me, but a ring which had been given me by Isabella.

It was made of her own hair, and its value was enhanced by being the only keep-sake I had from her ; notwithstanding which, I did not hesitate a moment in presenting it to him, as the only token of gratitude I had to bestow ; at the same time requesting to know the name of my deliverer, and that of my enemy.—“ I accept with pleasure,” said he, “ your little present, which I shall always keep by me to remind me of a good action. My name is Drausin St. Ange ; that of your enemy, I do not think myself at liberty to disclose ; but he is a Grand Chambellan of King Joseph, whom I am escorting from Madrid to this place, and he is going to Paris to take some dispatches to the Emperor. He is a sanguinary man, and has caused two or three Spaniards to be shot in our way here ; but I am determined to lend myself no longer to his barbarous inhumanity.”

Having thanked him again, I made the best of my way to the cottage where I had left my servant with my horses and portmanteau. On

my arrival there I learned, that after a diligent search in the mountains to find me out, my servant had proceeded on his way to our destination, leaving only my horse and arms behind, and carrying the rest with him. This was awkward ; for I had nothing in my pocket, the French voltigeurs having lightened me of every thing ; but my kind host so earnestly pressed me to take the little he himself possessed, that I was compelled to accede.—“ It is right,” added he, “ that I also should contribute, in however small a degree, to my country’s deliverance.”

I then took leave of him and his lovely daughter with feelings of the liveliest gratitude, and continued my way alone.

I had not, however, proceeded far, before I heard the bells of an *arriero’s* mules at no great distance. As I spurred on my horse, the harsh sound of the large bell tied round the neck of the first mule, which serves as a guide for the others, became more and more audible,

till at last I overtook the arriero, enveloped in his brown cloak, and sitting on the top of two enormous packs, which nearly hid the mule that carried them ; with a large round hat on his head, and a cigar in his mouth, the smoke of which formed a kind of glory round his head.

His countenance had an expression of energetic frankness, and his large dark eyes something thoughtful. With his right hand resting on the hilt of a sword, the blade of which was carefully concealed between the packs, he looked like a warrior musing on combats. He was mounted on the last mule ; but on the first I observed another muleteer with a bowl-crowned and broad-brimmed hat clapped over his right ear, a *chupa* or tight jacket, trimmed with many fringes and buttons, descending to his waist, with short flaps below it, a pair of slashed breeches and stiff leather gaiters, and to complete the whole, a cloak thrown gracefully over his left shoulder, leaving the right arm at

liberty. He was occupied in striking a light with his knife on a flint on which was his tinder, to light the cigar he held between his lips.

“*Sakud Caballeros,*”^a cried I, as I approached them.

“And *salero*”^b to you, Señor Capitan,” said the chief arriero, seemingly surprised.

“Blessed be the eyes that see those ribbons, after meeting in my way with so many gabachos with their hawks. I was considering why God Almighty should not have given me the arm of Sampson to put an end in half an hour to all the Philistines who tread the Spanish soil!”

At this moment the other arriero jumped lightly down from his mule, and came towards us. I immediately recognized Anton. “What! Anton,” cried I, “you a muleteer, after having been the king’s chief zagal!”

^a “Health to you, gentlemen,” a common salutation.

^b A reply often given to the above salutation by these kind of people, meaning a thousand good things, and a lady into the bargain.

“Ah! Señorito,” exclaimed he sorrowfully, “such are the ups and downs of this capricious life. But to be the king’s zagal, or a mozo of a muleteer, is all one to me, were it not that I am married, and have for my sins a sorceress, a cursed witch, a very devil for a wife, whom may God soon take into his holy keeping.”

“How could Anton commit such a folly?” cried I.

“It is,” said he, “because the wisest of us are subject to err. Here is the whole history. In passing one day with that good soul of a mayoral in whose service I was three years ago, through La Nava del Rey, I met with a troop of young wenches dancing on the green, and remarking the handsomest of them casting such roguish looks on me, I said to myself, ‘What a nice plum would this be if it fell in my mouth!’ (It was not a plum, but a sour berry,—but no matter.) I said to her,—‘Juice of my life! Don’t you think we might

make good porridge together?'^a 'I don't know but we might,' replied she. 'Touch there,' said I, stretching out my hand to her. 'Done,' said she, and off we went to adjust matters with her father. This may appear hasty to you; but as it was a folly I was committing, I thought that the sooner it was done the better. But what do you think her father said to me?—the son of a buck! neither more nor less, than 'if I wanted a wife I might go to Flanders^b in search of one; for that the daughter of barber Rebollo was not made for a zagal!' 'What!' cried I, 'do you mean to keep her for some marquis or count? and am I not as good a Christian as yourself? But,' added I, 'since you take it so, farewell for the present.' I then went to the vicar and told him I liked Ines, and Ines liked

^a *Hacer buenas migas juntos*, a Spanish proverb, meaning *to agree*.

^b Flanders, with the uneducated class in Spain, is the end of the world.

me ; but that her father did not like us to get married, and I was determined we should, by his and God's assistance. The vicar enquired into our love, and finding we both agreed, sent the notary to Master Rebollo's with orders to bring Ines away from his house, and take her to the one I had appointed. Here she remained until the Alcalde with the proper authority enquired into the matter, and gave the consent ; after which I took her to church in spite of Rebollo's teeth, which by this time seemed rather sharp-edged, but which availed him nothing on that occasion. Very soon, however, I got my punishment for this folly. Ines had received from her father the notion, that a barber was entitled to be called Don, and she, as his lawful daughter, Doña. In vain I frequently tried the only means of persuasion that providence had placed in my hands—the whip, to drive away such a notion from her head. The mule grew more stubborn every day ; and whenever

I called her as God had made her, she flew at me like a tygress, and would have succeeded in forcing the 'Doña' from me, had she not met with her match in master Anton."

"And pray," inquired I, "what have you done with her now?"

"I have left her at Madrid, that her Ladyship may do for herself as she pleases; for I told her, I would not live in purgatory if I could live in heaven, and God knew I had troubles enough without her. Now, however, I am determined to be my own master again, and let the ball roll. If you're in want of a servant, I am at your service, and you shall be well served too. I don't care what you give me, provided it be not blows. If I have enough to be able to say grace, it's all I want."

"That's moderate enough," cried I, "but the fact is, I have a servant, though I know not whether I shall ever again see him. Still, if you like to serve me till I find him, you are

welcome, and afterwards we shall see what I can do for you."

"I accept the offer with all my heart," said he, "for now-a-days 'tis better to be a soldier than a droning mozo de mulas."

CHAPTER XV.

Yet are Spain's maids no race of Amazons,
But formed for all the witching arts of love ;
Though thus in arms they emulate her sons,
And in the horrid phalanx dare to move,
'Tis but the tender fierceness of the dove
Pecking the hand that hovers o'er the mate.

Childe Harold.

By this time we arrived at an inn situated in the district of Algarria, on the boundaries of the two Castiles, at half a league distance from the new road of Madrid to Burgos. The inn, like the generality of Spanish inns, consisted of a large dark hall, contiguous to the road, and paved with round stones, like the streets in the towns. On a large hearth, raised about a foot from the ground, and at one extremity of the hall, blazed a wood fire. Besides the light it

diffused, a *candil*, or rude lamp of cast iron, hanging from the hook of a cane suspended from the ceiling in the middle of the room, scattered a faint light over a long narrow deal dining-table. Some long benches were placed on each side, and two broken chairs at each extremity.

Around the fire sat the travellers who had preceded us, enjoying the wit and humour of the landlord, and of a carrier, who seemed to vie with each other in saying good things. I took my seat with all the rest, and listened to their conversation, which now turned on the events of the war. This was presently interrupted, however, by the arrival of a friar, who would, in spite of the French, *be* a friar, and wear his monkish dress.

As soon as he came in, all remained silent, and he proceeded with great gravity to take a seat on the principal bench, near the landlady, and opposite another old woman, who, after kissing his hand, remained with her eyes fixed

on his with much devotion and veneration. The first impulse of the Friar, after being comfortably seated, was, to tuck up the long sleeves of his Franciscan habit, draw out a cigar-box, take out one, and stretch his hand to denote his wish for a piece of burning wood, which was immediately handed to him by the landlady. His cigar lighted, he lowered his wide cowl, showing a shaven head, crowned with a circle of hair, and began to expatiate on the vice of drinking to excess. This seemed the signal for Manuelita, as the father called the landlord's daughter, to hasten, according to custom, for a bottle of wine. He thanked her by carrying his hand to her chin, and patting her cheek: but at first she pushed it away rather roughly, till, recollecting herself, she seized it, and bent to kiss it.

The arriero, in whose company I had arrived at the inn, had been received by Manuelita with an embrace, which they fancied no one saw. He came now into the hall, having unloaded his mules, and saluted the company with his wonted

gaiety, notwithstanding the look of displeasure cast on him by the Franciscan. He then threw upon a table his large cloak, and shewed the Andalusian costume in its greatest perfection. A reddecilla,^a floating over his shoulders, inclosed the long tresses of his black hair tied together ; fringes of various colours laced every seam of his dress ; his short jacket was trimmed with silk buttons, both on the shoulders and on the sleeves ; his elegant vest was adorned with several rows of hanging silver buttons, as were also the knees of his velvet breeches. A round well-made leg appeared to great advantage by the white stocking he wore ; and the feet were inclosed in shoes just covering the toes, graced with a magnificent bow of silk lace. He placed his sword delicately on the cloak, as if afraid of hurting it. “ Toledana^b mia,” exclaimed he, as he laid it down, “ darling of my soul, repose there awhile ; for thou needest repose. Many

^a A small net for the hair.

^b The Toledo blades are called Toledanas.

gabachos' heads have felt thy edge, and King Pepe^a himself may one day try thy temper."

"Andalusians," said the friar, "have the reputation of being greater babblers than doers."

"Reverend father," cried the arriero, casting an oblique look on the Friar, "the frying pan said to the kettle, 'Stand out of the way, thou black thing;'^b to which I may add—did you ever know a friar courageous out of the refectory?"

"You might by this time," replied the friar, growing angry, "have learned how to respect this habit, which sufficiently shows to you that I am no arriero, but a holy minister of our holy church."

"Reverend father," returned the arriero, calmly, "the habit I venerate; but a hog in armour is still but a hog,"^c—and without waiting for an answer he left the room.

^a The familiar name for Joseph.

^b Spanish proverb.—*Dijo la sarten á la caldera, quitaos, a'la negra.*

^c *Aunque la mona se vista de seda, mona se queda.*

“Señor official,” said the friar, addressing himself to me, with an accent of despair, “did you ever witness more insolence in an arriero? Is he not an atrocious—nay, a sacrilegious villain? Is it possible for Spain to be saved with such renegadoes as these in her bosom? I’ll lay my life, that he is an unbaptized descendant of the Moors.”

“Father,” cried I, “if you appeal to me, I acquit the arriero; for certainly you were the aggressor in this instance.”

“But, my son,” returned he, a little surprised, “you surely know that we, ministers of God, have a right to admonish the children of the church whenever we think fit?”

“That may be very proper,” said I, “when we, children of the church, stand in need of it; but, good father, the arriero, far from uttering any thing improper, began by shewing sentiments highly praiseworthy, which you, in my humble opinion, most unwarrantably checked.”

“You don’t understand any thing about it,”

said the father, swallowing a large bumper, "nor are you capable of understanding it."

"You mean, father, that as I never learned theology, I cannot be expected to possess common sense."

"Common sense," returned he, (filling up his glass,) "without the light of heaven," (holding it up between his eye and the light) "can be of little assistance to guide us in our judgments;—none but the servants of God can possess that; but such is the corruption of our age, and the ground gained by those infernal maxims of the heretics of England and France, that our youths begin to shake their heads as if we wanted to deceive them."

I made no answer to this sensible speech, and he continued abusing the age of heresy, as he called it, and emptying his bottle. He, indeed, monopolized so completely the conversation, that nothing was heard in the hall, but his voice. The old aunt who held in her hand a chaplet, the glass beads of which slipped between her fin-

gers with great precision, though seemingly wholly absorbed in her pious occupation, cast now and then a look round the room, to see what Manuelita might be doing, while at other times her fingers remained motionless as she listened with great attention to the voice of the friar.

While our loquacious, if not eloquent preacher was thus occupied, our landlady and Manuelita were employed more substantially, in dressing successively in the same frying pan salt fish with oil and love apples, omelets of eggs, and cheese, ham, sausages and black puddings. We were now in anxious expectation of our dinner hour ; and at last Manuelita began to prepare by spreading out what might be better called a dish-clout than a table-cloth, and which covered just the top of the table. Here the Franciscan friar immediately took his seat ; and after giving his benediction with his two fore-fingers, all the company sat down. I had the honour of being on the friar's right hand,

and the old aunt on his left, thus participating in the use of the brown cloth, just enough to place a broken plate upon it—which had been taken out of the hiding place with a few more; where they had been concealed for fear the French should run away with them, and to which place they were to be returned immediately after dinner.

Anton, who had no plate given him, and who was obliged to come backwards and forwards from the dish to the piece of bread that served him instead, exclaimed,—“By the mother who brought me forth! this is a true terrestrial paradise, men live in this corner of the earth like brothers!—we are nearly twenty guests, and we content ourselves with two plates, two knives, and a *botija*,^a which serves admirably in the place of fifteen glasses!”

“Son of an Infidel!” cried the host, in a passion, “I would not change my country for

^a Earthen jar, with a short and narrow neck

all the riches of your own. Whenever I see one of your Andalusian bullies, with your impudence, your festoons, and your fringes, it is to me the same as getting as many kicks as there are buttons in your vests and jackets. You are all Moors and Infidels, whom may Satan carry to his caldrons !”

“ Amen !” ejaculated the friar : “ I am of the same opinion.”

“ Father !” cried I, “ doubtless you say that out of Christian charity for the poor Andalusians.”

“ Never mind,” cried the arriero. “ His fraternity’s opinion, we all know, is like the water to the mill, (excepting its utility) it turns it without breaking it.”

“ This is but throwing chaff to the wind,” said Anton, falling foul of some black puddings which he had been ogling for a long time, without being able to reach--but which had been gradually pushed towards him. “ Whenever I fall in with this kind of food,” added he,

holding the dish between his hands, "I perceive an odour of amber which comforts my heart; for we always used to eat it in Seville, made by the hands of a sister of mine, and so excellent it was, that even a Saint would have licked his fingers after it."

Dinner being over, each retired to take his nap; the traveller who had a mule or a donkey, on his pack saddle, and he who travelled on foot, on his cloak. The doors of the general bed-room, as well as that of the stable-yard, opening into the hall or kitchen, our olfactory organs were now and then regaled with a perfume, which had no resemblance whatever to those Arabia is blest with! Not wishing to enjoy it more than I could help, I ordered Anton to saddle my horse to depart.

At that moment the arriero took his cloak, his hat, and his sword, and saying,—“Dios guarde á ustedes,” to which they all muttered,—“Dios le acompañe,”^a he retired. Manuelita

^a “God keep ye.”—“God be with you.”

pronounced those words with apparent emotion ; but the searching and severe looks of the friar, the frowns of the aunt, and the gravity of the father, compelled her to lower her eyes, unable to receive the parting look of the sorrowful arriero, who could only send her a sigh instead.

My horse being ready, I too wished them a good bye, and we left the Venta. Soon after we entered a rocky defile that opened into a wild and extensive valley, on every side of which rose mountains that from the small stone splinters of which they are composed, one would almost imagine were artificial. Hardly any vegetation enlivens a scene that seems too dreary for any living inhabitants. Yet even on those naked and barren slopes the hut of the peasant is seen, and below it his labour and industry have succeeded in raising fruits, and even corn sufficient for his subsistence.

Towards evening, we perceived a little before us a cavalcade, but as it was growing dark I would not come too near it, being apprehensive

of finding it composed of French troops. Presently, however, they all halted, and some of them perceiving us, detached themselves towards us at full gallop. We stood still.

“Quien vive?” cried one of them, with a voice like thunder.

“Spain,” replied I.

“And who are you?” inquired he, with a threatening tone, as he approached, pointing a pistol at my head. “Are you a d——d *francesado*?”^a

“This cockade and these ribbons ought to shew you that I am not one”

“There,” said he, with an oath, “you lie. They show me no such thing; for if you are a patriot, where are you going through this road? I suppose to Aranda, where the French now are! What to do there, God knows, and Nuestra Señora del Pilar only can tell: but several Josephinos, who of late have passed this way

^a A partizan of the French.

with ribbons and cockades like yours, have shown us that a cat may pass for a hare when properly dressed. Is it not so, eh ?”

“ You ask too many questions at a time, Master Sergeant,” said I, calmly ; “ and to say the truth, I suspect the proverb of the cat may apply to yourself better than to me. If, however, I find that you and your troop belong to those who under the name of patriots are no better than robbers, I promise you to find means before a week elapses to make you all decorate those trees with your persons.”

Another of the party now approached, and tapping me on the shoulder,—“ Muchachito,”^a said he, “ notwithstanding your cunning, we are too old foxes to swallow that. You resemble as much the son of a Josephine as ever son did father—so none of your bravadoes, for by the Saviour of Burgos, I’ll send thy soul to hell.”

^a My Lad.

“Dismount quickly,” said another, throwing his cloak on one side, and seizing my horse by the bridle; “for the queen of the angels seems to have sent thee here on purpose to complete the equipment of a defender of Religion and Ferdinand.”

“Who is the commander of these men?” cried I, unsheathing my sword, and threatening the one who had seized my horse’s bridle. At this moment, a young fine looking officer, dressed in a hussar’s uniform, rode up, mounted on a beautiful horse, accompanied by two other hussars, and with an effeminate voice, enquired who we were. Immediately the whole set drew aside to leave a free passage for him, and I answered, “that his men had thought proper not only to stop me on my way to the place assigned me by the Government of Cadiz, as my papers would show, but most grossly to insult me.—Is that,” added I, “the discipline taught to your soldiers?”

“The fact is,” said the officer, “that these

men know nothing of discipline, or the laws of war ; they even detest and despise every thing connected with regular troops. I have often seen them, even on the field of battle, take their own course,—fly at the moment of victory, or dispute their ground with an overpowering enemy. Leave them to their own valour and resources, and they'll acquit themselves well—but you must never expect to teach them any subordination.”

“ That,” said I, “ is a tolerably frank avowal, and I like you for your candour. But I must differ from you as to their inveterate obstinacy ; a few of them shot or hanged would soon bring the rest to reason. It is impossible they can serve their country well, if no subordination is kept up among them.”

I had hardly done speaking, when a tall fierce looking man rode up towards us, accompanied by a few cavalry. I learned from my protector that it was the Curate Merino. As he approached, I watched him with curiosity.

He was large and robust, of a very repulsive countenance, and a savage dignity of manner. Thick bushy eye-brows shaded his eyes completely, his lips were covered with mustachios of an immense length, and his head looked like Medusa's from the stiff bristly hair that would neither bend one way nor another."

"Pepita," said he, with a harsh voice, "night is coming on, and I have some information to gain. Should any thing requiring my presence occur, I shall be at the Vicary, close by, at one o'clock after midnight. So that I leave to thee the care of my men—Adieu!"

Saying this he put spurs to his horse and disappeared, unaccompanied by any one. As we moved forward, I expressed my surprise at hearing him call the young officer Pepita.^a He smiled, and uncovering his head, said, "you might have seen before now, that I am not one of your sex. I am in fact a woman, whose un-

^a Josephine.

lucky stars have brought her into the hands of that cowardly savage you have just seen."

"A woman!" exclaimed I, "and in the power of Curate Merino!—What could bring you into such a situation?"

"Inconsideration and weakness. I am a native of Aranda de Duero, and (for my sins) I fell in love with a French officer, who was billeted in our house. He made an offer to me of his hand, and, on his departure, I abandoned my paternal roof, under which I had always lived happily and beloved by my tender parents. In our way to Burgos, the French detachment with which I went was attacked by the Curate, and the greatest part of them made prisoners. I cannot describe to you the scene that followed. They were all murdered in a manner too cruel, too horrible to relate, and among them my future husband. He died before my eyes, under the most excruciating torments. I was threatened by Merino with a similar fate, if I would not yield to his wishes. At first I spurned the

base proposal, but when he ordered his men to strip me in order to torture me, as they had just done the other poor wretches, my courage failed, and I yielded. I have now lived with him above six months, and the more I know of him, the more I regret that I had not fortitude enough to meet death when I ought. He is a cruel blood-thirsty coward, who trusts to no one. Constantly haunted by his fears, he sleeps every night in a different house to the one he mentions, and often at the distance of four or five leagues from his men, that he may not be surprised by the French. To-night you heard him say he was to be found at the Vicary; but God and himself only know the true place. With such a leader, you will no longer wonder at the insolent ruffian-like treatment you have just received from his followers."

"And is it with these wretches you mean to pass your life?" said I.

"What can I do? How can I escape: or whither could I go?"—The melancholy tone in

which the unfortunate woman uttered this, touched me to the soul.

“ If my assistance,” said I, “ can be of use, you may command me. I will protect you till we reach our station, and there we may find some means of conveying you safely home.”

“ Home !” exclaimed she, with a bitter accent, “ I have no home !—I have made it desolate—my poor parents died of grief at my flight—no, I have no longer a home !”

She bent her head down, and rode on in silence till we arrived at a farm, where we took up our quarters for the night. Here supped with her, and when all had retired to rest:—
“ Don Esteban,” said she, “ I thank you for the generous offer of your assistance ; but the plan you propose would be no kindness to me. After suffering as I have done, and losing every thing valued by woman, I could not return to a tranquil life, even if it were possible to procure an asylum for me. The life I now lead suits me better. I am become accustomed to its fa-

tigues, and its dangers divert my thoughts from my past miseries, and offer besides a chance of soon escaping from them altogether. But hating, as I do, this savage tyrant, to whom I am a perfect slave, I would willingly leave him. Can you take me with you? I would enter your regiment as a private, and devote my life to your service. Your protection is all I should ask in return."

She spoke with such earnestness, it gave me pain to refuse her, and I endeavoured to explain the reasons why such a step was utterly impracticable. She parried them with much ingenuity; and at last I said,—“I should deceive you, if I did not own there is one other reason, which, even if your plan were practicable, would prevent me from assenting to it. My heart is pledged to one who—”

“I understand you now,” said she, interrupting me, “I, too, will be candid in my turn, and conceal nothing from you,—on the first oppor-

tunity it is my intention to seek another protector."^a

So saying, she left me, and I retired to snatch a few hours rest. At dawn, the whole party were on their legs, preparing to go to the place appointed by Merino, and as it happened to be one league in my way, I had their company during that time. Pepita appeared with the gay unconcerned look which she had when I first saw her ; all traces of the feelings of the preceding evening having quite disappeared. She leaped lightly on her courser, and, taking the lead with me, commenced singing, with an appropriate expression of tenderness, an old romance on the departure of some faithful Knight for the Holy Land. The scenery before us exactly answered the words she was singing. The soldiers were seen wandering from height to height, brandishing their naked swords, which

^a Some time afterwards, I learned, that she had gone over to the French, and was living in Burgos with a French General.

glittered in the beams of the sun just rising from amidst the mountains. Her voice, re-echoed by those silent rocks, was sweet yet powerful, and the energy and animation of her countenance, added to her attitudes, full of grace and dignity, gave to the simple words of the ballad an indescribable effect.

Our roads soon separating, we parted, and after three days' march, I arrived at Osma, where Count Montijo happened then to be stationed with part of his division. I was immediately admitted into one of his cavalry corps, and received by my new brother officers with that cordiality and affection that others would have shewn for an old companion.

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Llanos Gutiérrez, Valentin,

Don Esteban; or, memoirs of a spaniard written by himself

Bd.: 1

London 1826

Biogr. 363 p-1

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